LIFE OF DICKENS

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A SHORT

LIFE OF CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH SELECTIONS FROM HIS LETTERS.

BY

CHARLES H. JONES,

AUTHOR OF

"LORD MACAULAY: HIS LIFE—HIS WRITINGS," ETC.

NEW YORK:

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,

1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.

1880.

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PREFACE.

THE following work is an attempt to give in a concise and compact form such an account of Dickens's life and work as will meet the requirements of that numerous class of readers whose curiosity about even so popular an author as Dickens can be satisfied within the modest limits of a handy volume.

The life of Dickens was eventful and varied in its activities to a degree very rare with men of letters; and a work which should include all the available materials, and at the same time comment upon them, would be very voluminous indeed. Partly for this reason, and partly because, if any books can be said to do so, Dickens's books explain and vindicate themselves, this little work is biographical and scarcely at all critical—thus concentrating as many of the more interesting facts as possible into the limited space at command, and avoiding the stilted superfluousness of interpretation with which

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Mr. Forster has accompanied his record of the great novelist's work. And it may be added that, in deciding what classes of facts to render prominent in the narrative and what to keep subordinate, the author has kept in mind that wise and true saying of Sir Arthur Helps's that, "when a great man departs from us, what we desire to know about him is not so much what he *did* as what he *was*."

Wherever possible, Dickens has been allowed to depict himself and tell his own story, and it is hardly necessary to say that some of the most entertaining and characteristic things he ever wrote are to be found in his private letters. Besides these letters, materials have been freely drawn from Mr. Forster's and Dr. Shelton Mackenzie's biographies, from Mr. Stoddard's "Anecdote Biography," from Mr. Blanchard Jerrold's "A Day with Charles Dickens," from Mr. William Kent's "Charles Dickens as a Reader," from the bibliographies of Mr. James Cook and Mr. Richard Herne Shepherd, from Dickens's own prefaces to the earlier and later editions of his books—in short, from the entire Dickens literature. For the earlier years, Mr. Forster is the only trustworthy authority; for all subsequent periods the materials bewilder by their very copiousness.

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CHARLES DICKENS.

I.

FROM BIRTH TO MANHOOD.

Charles Dickens (christened Charles John Huffham Dickens) was born at Landport, a suburb of Portsmouth, England, on the 7th of February, 1812. Of his ancestry, our knowledge goes back no further than to his father, John Dickens, who was a clerk in the Navy-pay office, and who at the time of his famous son's birth was stationed in the Portsmouth dockyard. His mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Barrow, and she was sister to Thomas Barrow, who was engaged in the same office with Mr. John Dickens. The future novelist was the second of a family of eight children, of whom two died in infancy, and of whom only one (his sister Letitia) survived at the time of his own death.

That the keen observation, which was the keynote of Dickens's literary faculty as memory was of Macaulay's, was developed remarkably early is

shown by the fact that, though the family removed from Portsmouth when Charles was only two years old, he always retained a distinct impression of the small front garden of the house in which they had lived, remembered the exact shape of the military parade-ground seen by him as a very infant, and was able to recall the fact that they had come away from Portsmouth in the snow.

His father having been recalled from Portsmouth to London by his official duties, the family went into lodgings in Norfolk Street, Middlesex Hospital; but their home, shortly after, was again changed, on the elder Dickens being assigned to duty in Chatham dockyard. At Chatham, the family resided from the time when Charles was between four and five until he was nine years of age; and here, says Mr. Forster, "the most durable of his early impressions were received."

As a child, Dickens was very small and very sickly, being subject to attacks of violent spasms which disabled him for any active exertion. He seldom participated in the childish sports which he saw going on around him, but, while the other boys played, amused himself with reading. This early taste for reading, he used to say, was first awakened by his mother; but he always entertained the belief that the feebleness of his health in childhood had brought him one inestimable advantage, in that it had intensified the taste into a passion.

What books he read at this early period, and what was his mental attitude in regard to them, is revealed in the following passage from "David Copperfield," in which David tells Steerforth at school of the stories he had read in his childhood, and every word of which (so Mr. Forster assures us) had been written down as facts some years before it found its way into the novel :

"My father had left a small collection of books in a little room up stairs to which I had access (for it adjoined my own), and which nobody else in our house ever troubled. From that blessed little room 'Roderick Random,' 'Peregrine Pickle,' 'Humphrey Clinker,' 'Tom Jones,' the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' 'Don Quixote,' 'Gil Blas,' and 'Robinson Crusoe' came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time—they, and the 'Arabian Nights' and the 'Tales of the Genii'—and did me no harm; for whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me; *I* knew nothing of it. It is astonishing to me now how I found time, in the midst of my porings and blunderings over heavier themes, to read those books as I did. It is curious to me how I could ever have consoled myself under my small troubles (which were great troubles to me), by impersonating my favorite characters in them. . . . I have been Tom Jones (a child's Tom Jones, a harmless creature) for a week together. I have sustained my own idea of Roderick Random for a month at a stretch, I verily believe. I had a greedy relish for a few volumes of voyages and travels—I forget what, now—that were on those shelves; and for days and days I can

remember to have gone about my region of our house, armed with the center-piece out of an old set of boot-trees: the perfect realization of Captain Somebody, of the royal British navy, in danger of being beset by savages, and resolved to sell his life at a great price. . . . When I think of it, the picture always rises in my mind, of a summer evening, the boys at play in the churchyard, and I sitting on my bed, reading as if for life. Every barn in the neighborhood, every stone in the church, and every foot of the churchyard, had some association of its own, in my mind, connected with these books, and stood for some locality made famous in them. I have seen Tom Pipes go climbing up the church-steeple; I have watched Strap, with the knapsack on his back, stopping to rest himself upon the wicket-gate; and I *know* that Commodore Trunnion held that club with Mr. Pickle, in the parlor of our little village alehouse."

Where the appetite for reading was so keen, it is not surprising that a desire to write should manifest itself very early; and the young Charles was little more than six years old when he became famous in his childish circle for having written a tragedy called "Misnar, the Sultan of India," found on one of the "Tales of the Genii." Nor was this his only distinction in those early years. "He told a story off-hand so well," says Mr. Forster, "and sang small comic songs so especially well, that he used to be elevated on chairs and tables, both at home and abroad, for more effective display of these talents; and when he told

me of this, at one of the Twelfth-night parties on his eldest son's birthday, he said he never recalled it that his own shrill little voice of childhood did not again tingle in his ears, and he blushed to think what a horrible little nuisance he must have been to many unoffending grown-up people who were called upon to admire him."

Perhaps the incident which turned the childish author's attention to the drama was his association with a youth of some ability, much older than himself, named James Lamert, stepson to his mother's sister, and therefore a sort of cousin. Young Lamert had a taste for private theatricals; and as his father's quarters were in the ordnance hospital at Chatham, a great rambling place otherwise at that time almost uninhabited, he had plenty of room in which to get up his entertainments. By Lamert, Dickens was first taken to the theatre, at an age so early that he could not afterward identify it, but not too early for him to recollect how his heart leaped with terror when the wicked King Richard, struggling for life against the virtuous Richmond, backed up and bumped against the box in which he was. Subsequent visits to the same sanctuary, as he tells us, revealed to him many wondrous secrets, "of which not the least terrific were, that the witches in 'Macbeth' bore an awful resemblance to the Thanes and other proper inhabitants of Scotland; and that the good King Duncan couldn't rest in

his grave, but was constantly coming out of it and calling himself somebody else."

Besides the reading and other occupations of which we have spoken, some more systematic efforts at mental training were made during Dickens's residence at Chatham. The first rudiments of English, and a little later, of Latin, were taught him by his mother. Mr. Forster mentions having put a question to him regarding this, to which he replied, in almost exactly the words he afterward placed in the mouth of David Copperfield: "I faintly remember her teaching me the alphabet; and when I look upon the fat black letters in the primer, the puzzling novelty of their shapes, and the easy good-nature of O and S, always seem to present themselves before me as they used to do." After this, but while still the merest infant, he went with his sister Fanny to the preparatory day-school, of which the only impression that he retained was "that he went up steps to it; that he had frequently grazed his knees in doing so; and that in trying to scrape the mud off a very unsteady little shoe, he generally got his leg over the scraper."

During the last two years of the residence at Chatham, he was sent to a school kept in Clover Lane by a young Baptist minister, named William Giles. Says Mr. Forster: "I have the picture of him here very strongly in my mind, as a sensitive, thoughtful, feeble-bodied little boy, with an

unusual sort of knowledge and fancy for such a child, and with a dangerous kind of wandering intelligence that a teacher might turn to good or evil, happiness or misery, as he directed it. Nor does the influence of Mr. Giles, such as it was, seem to have been other than favorable. Charles had himself a not ungrateful sense in after-years that this first of his masters, in his little-cared-for childhood, had pronounced him to be a boy of capacity; and when, about half-way through the publication of 'Pickwick,' his old teacher sent a silver snuff-box with admiring inscription to the 'inimitable Boz,' it reminded him of praise far more precious obtained by him at his first year's examination in the Clover Lane academy, when his recitation of a piece out of the 'Humorist's Miscellany' about Doctor Bolus, had received, unless his youthful vanity bewildered him, a double encore."

When Charles was a little over nine years old his father was again recalled to London, and he had to leave this teacher whom he had learned to love, and the places endeared to him by associations whose memory clung to him all his life. It was here that he had become familiar not only with the books that David Copperfield specially names, but also with the "Spectator," the "Tatler," the "Idler," the "Citizen of the World," and Mrs. Inchbald's "Collection of Farces." "These latter," says Mr. Forster, "had been as well in

the little library to which access was open to him ; and of all of them his earliest remembrance was the having read them over and over at Chatham, not for the first, the second, or the third time. They were a host of friends when he had no single friend ; and, in leaving the place, I have often heard him say, he seemed to be leaving them too, and everything that had given his ailing little life its picturesqueness or sunshine. It was the birthplace of his fancy; and he hardly knew what store he had set by its busy varieties of change and scene, until he saw the falling cloud that was to hide its pictures from him for ever." He was sent to London by stage-coach, and long afterward he recollected the journey, and said in one of his published papers that, never had he forgotten, through all the intervening years, the smell of the damp straw in which he was packed and forwarded like game, carriage-paid. "There was no other inside passenger, and I consumed my sandwiches in solitude and dreariness, and it rained hard all the way, and I thought life sloppier than I expected to find it."

With the return to London began a period which Dickens could never afterward recall without the most painful feelings, and which forms the one sorrowful episode in what was otherwise a singularly joyous and happy life. As an introduction to our account of this period, it will be necessary to say something of the character of

the elder Dickens ; and any detailed description of him will be rendered superfluous by the statement that he was the original of Mr. Micawber in "David Copperfield." The reckless improvidence in money matters, the ingenious devices for keeping up appearances, and the habit of "waiting for something to turn up," that characterized Mr. Micawber, were drawn to the life from Mr. Dickens ; and precisely the same consequences which resulted from these qualities in the fictitious story also followed upon them in the real life of the original.

The family, it appears, had hardly settled in London when affairs reached a crisis. Mr. Dickens was obliged to make what was called "a composition with his creditors," and, in pursuance of the enforced economy which this involved, he removed to a house in Bayham Street, Camden-town. "Bayham Street," says Mr. Forster, "was about the poorest part of the London suburbs then, and the house was a mean, small tenement, with a wretched little back garden abutting on a squalid court. Here was no place for new acquaintances to him : no boys were near with whom he might hope to become in any way familiar. A washer-woman lived next door, and a Bow Street officer lived over the way. Many, many times has he spoken to me of this, and how he seemed at once to fall into a solitary condition apart from all other boys of his own age, and to

sink into a neglected state at home which had been always quite unaccountable to him. 'As I thought,' he said on one occasion, very bitterly, 'in the little back garret in Bayham Street, of all I had lost in losing Chatham, what would I have given, if I had had anything to give, to have been sent back to any other school, to have been taught something anywhere!'" About this time his elder sister, Fanny, was elected as a pupil to the Royal Academy of Music; and Dickens has told of what a stab to his heart it was, thinking of his own disregarded condition, to see her go away to begin her education, amid the tearful good wishes of everybody in the house.

Many years afterward, in describing this period to Mr. Forster, Dickens said: "I know my father to be as kind-hearted and generous a man as ever lived in the world. Everything that I can remember of his conduct to his wife, or children, or friends, in sickness or affliction, is beyond all praise. By me, as a sick child, he has watched night and day, unweariedly and patiently, many nights and days. He never undertook any business, charge, or trust, that he did not zealously, conscientiously, punctually, honorably discharge. His industry has always been untiring. He was proud of me, in his way, and had a great admiration of the comic singing. But, in the ease of his temper, and the straitness of his means, he appeared to have utterly lost at this time the idea of

educating me at all, and to have utterly put from him the notion that I had any claim upon him, in that regard, whatever. So I degenerated into cleaning his boots of a morning, and my own; and making myself useful in the work of the little house; and looking after my younger brothers and sisters (we were now six in all); and going on such poor errands as arose out of our poor way of living."

Almost the only pleasant recollections associated with this period were of occasional visits to his mother's elder brother and his godfather.

"The latter, who was what is called a rigger, and mast-, oar-, and block-maker, lived at Limehouse in a substantial, handsome sort of way, and was kind to his godchild. It was always a great treat to him to go; and the London night-sights as he returned were a perpetual joy and marvel. Here, too, the comic-singing accomplishment was brought into play so greatly to the admiration of one of the godfather's guests, an honest boat-builder, that he pronounced the little lad to be a 'progidy.' The visits to his bachelor-uncle were nearer home. Mr. Thomas Barrow, the eldest of his mother's family, had broken his leg in a fall; and, while laid up with this illness, his lodging was in Gerrard Street, Soho, in the upper part of the house of a worthy gentleman then recently deceased, a bookseller named Manson . . . whose widow at this time carried on the business. Attracted by the look of the lad as he went up stairs, these good people lent him books to amuse him; among them Miss Porter's 'Scottish Chiefs,' Holbein's 'Dance of

Death,' and George Colman's 'Broad Grins.' The latter seized his fancy very much; and he was so impressed by its description of Covent Garden, in the piece called 'The Elder Brother,' that he stole down to the market by himself to compare it with the book.

"His uncle was shaved by a very odd old barber out of Dean Street, Soho, who was never tired of reviewing the events of the last war, and especially of detecting Napoleon's mistakes, and rearranging his whole life for him on a plan of his own. The boy wrote a description of this old barber, but never had courage to show it. At about the same time, taking for his model the description of the canon's housekeeper in 'Gil Blas,' he sketched a deaf old woman who waited on them in Bayham Street, and who made delicate hashes with walnut-ketchup. As little did he dare to show this, either; though he thought it, himself, extremely clever."

In the mean while, no piece of good fortune happening to turn up, his father's affairs were continually growing worse, and as a last resource it was determined that his mother should make an effort to "do something." The attempt and its result are thus described by Mr. Forster:

"The godfather down at Limehouse was reported to have an Indian connection. People in the East Indies always sent their children home to be educated. She would set up a school. They would all grow rich by it. And then, thought the sick boy, 'perhaps even I might go to school myself.' A house was soon found at number four, Gower Street north; a large brass plate on the door announced MRS. DICKENS'S ESTABLISHMENT; and

the result I can give in the exact words of the then small actor in the comedy, whose hopes it had raised so high. 'I left at a great many other doors a great many circulars calling attention to the merits of the establishment. Yet nobody ever came to school, nor do I recollect that anybody ever proposed to come, or that the least preparation was made to receive anybody. But I know that we got on very badly with the butcher and baker; that very often we had not too much for dinner; and that at last my father was arrested.'"

The passages in "David Copperfield" describing the committal of Mr. Micawber to the Marshalsea prison, and little David's first visit to him there, were an exact transcript from Dickens's experiences at this time, and were written down as facts long before the idea of the fiction had taken shape in the novelist's brain. The last words said to him by his father before he was finally carried to the Marshalsea were to the effect that the sun was set upon him for ever; "and I really believed at the time," said Dickens, "that they had broken my heart."

After the imprisonment of Mr. Dickens the family circumstances speedily became desperate. By degrees everything that had a value was sold or pawned, little Charles being the principal agent in those sorrowful transactions. The things first parted with were such of the books as had been brought from Chatham; they were taken to a bookseller in Hampstead Road, the same that

David Copperfield describes as in the City Road, and the account of the sales as they actually occurred was reproduced word for word in the imaginary narrative. "The same pawnbroker's shop, too, which was so well known to David, became not less familiar to Charles; and a good deal of notice was here taken of him by the pawnbroker, or by his principal clerk who officiated behind the counter, and who, while making out the duplicate, liked of all things to hear the lad conjugate a Latin verb and translate or decline his *musa* and *dominus*. Everything to this accompaniment went gradually; until, at last, even of the furniture of Gower Street number four, there was nothing left except a few chairs, a kitchen table, and some beds. Then they encamped, as it were, in the two parlors of the emptied house, and lived there night and day."

At this juncture began a series of incidents in Dickens's own life which caused him unspeakable misery at the time, which he could never afterward think of without pain, and which permanently influenced his character. These incidents were narrated by him in a fragment of autobiography, which, as Mr. Forster says, apart from the illustration it affords of the growth of his character, presents to us a picture of tragical suffering, and of tender as well as humorous fancy, unsurpassed in even the wonders of his published writings.

The preparation of this autobiographical frag-

ment was due to a casual question put to him by Mr. Forster in the March or April of 1847. "I asked him," says Mr. Foster, "if he remembered ever having seen in his boyhood our friend the elder Mr. Dilke, his father's acquaintance and contemporary, who had been a clerk in the same office in Somerset House to which Mr. John Dickens belonged. Yes, he said, he recollected seeing him at a house in Gerrard Street, where his uncle Barrow lodged during an illness, and Mr. Dilke had visited him. Never at any other time. Upon which I told him that some one else had been intended in the mention made to me, for that the reference implied not merely his being met accidentally, but his having had some juvenile employment in a warehouse near the Strand; at which place Mr. Dilke, being with the elder Dickens one day, had noticed him, and received, in return for the gift of a half-crown, a very low bow. He was silent for several minutes; I felt that I had unintentionally touched a painful place in his memory; and to Mr. Dilke I never spoke of the subject again. It was not, however, then, but some weeks later, that Dickens made further allusion to my thus having struck unconsciously upon a time of which he never could lose the remembrance while he remembered anything, and the recollection of which, at intervals, haunted him and made him miserable, even to that hour."

The first effect of this accidental stumbling

upon the most painful incident of his past was to suggest to Dickens the idea of writing his own life, and he had actually made some progress in the work when his imagination seized upon the recollections which came thronging upon him as affording better materials for a story; hence "David Copperfield." Of course Dickens was too great an artist to make the incidents in the imaginary David Copperfield's life in all respects identical with those of his own, and the novel must not be taken too literally; but with the aid of Dickens's original manuscript written prior to the conception of the story, and of proof-sheets of the latter interlined by Dickens at the time, Mr. Forster was enabled to construct a complete account of this portion of Dickens's life, mostly in Dickens's own words.

The only further explanatory statement that need precede the introduction of the autobiographical fragment is that the person mainly responsible for the painful episode was the James Lamert, previously mentioned, whose cousin had recently embarked in an odd sort of commercial speculation.

DICKENS'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.*

"This speculation was a rivalry of 'Warren's Blacking, 30, Strand,'—at that time very famous. One Jona-

* This fragment is given substantially as it appears in the second chapter of Forster's "Life," partly in his own words and partly in Dickens's.

than Warren (the famous one was Robert), living at 30, Hungerford Stairs, or Market, Strand (for I forget which it was called then), claimed to have been the original inventor or proprietor of the blacking recipe, and to have been deposed and ill-used by his renowned relation. At last he put himself in the way of selling his recipe, and his name, and his 30, Hungerford Stairs, Strand (30, Strand, very large, and the intermediate direction very small), for an annuity; and he set forth by his agents that a little capital would make a great business of it. The man of some property was found in George Lamert, the cousin and brother-in-law of James. He bought this right and title, and went into the blacking business and the blacking premises.

"—In an evil hour for me, as I often bitterly thought. Its chief manager, James Lamert, the relative who had lived with us in Bayham Street, seeing how I was employed from day to day, and knowing what our domestic circumstances then were, proposed that I should go into the blacking warehouse, to be as useful as I could, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. I am not clear whether it was six or seven. I am inclined to believe, from my uncertainty on this head, that it was six at first, and seven afterward. At any rate, the offer was accepted, very willingly by my father and mother, and on a Monday morning I went down to the blacking warehouse to begin my business life.

"It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me that, even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me—a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally—to

suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. Our friends, I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar-school, and going to Cambridge.

"The blacking warehouse was the last house on the left-hand side of the way, at old Hungerford Stairs. It was a crazy, tumble-down old house, abutting of course on the river, and literally overrun with rats. Its wainscoted rooms, and its rotten floors and staircase, and the old gray rats swarming down in the cellars, and the sound of their squeaking and scuffling coming up the stairs at all times, and the dirt and decay of the place, rise up visibly before me, as if I were there again. The counting-house was on the first floor, looking over the coal-barges and the river. There was a recess in it, in which I was to sit and work. My work was to cover the pots of paste blacking; first with a piece of oil-paper, and then with a piece of blue paper; to tie them round with a string; and then to clip the paper close and neat, all round, until it looked as smart as a pot of ointment from an apothocary's shop. When a certain number of grosses of pots had attained this pitch of perfection, I was to paste on each a printed label, and then go on again with more pots. Two or three other boys were kept at similar duty down stairs on similar wages. One of them came up, in a ragged apron and a paper cap, on the first Monday morning, to show me the trick of using the string and tying the knot. His name was Bob Fagin; and I took the liberty of using his name, long afterward, in "Oliver Twist."

"Our relative had kindly arranged to teach me something in the dinner-hour; from twelve to one, I think it was; every day. But an arrangement so incompatible with counting-house business soon died away, from no fault of his or mine; and, for the same reason, my small work-table, and my grosses of pots, my papers, string, scissors, paste-pot, and labels, by little and little, vanished out of the recess in the counting-house, and kept company with the other small work-tables, grosses of pots, papers, string, scissors, and paste-pots, down stairs. It was not long before Bob Fagin and I, and another boy whose name was Paul Green, but who was currently believed to have been christened Poll (a belief which I transferred, long afterward again, to Mr. Sweedlepipe, in "Martin Chuzzlewit"), worked generally side by side. Bob Fagin was an orphan, and lived with his brother-in-law, a waterman. Poll Green's father had the additional distinction of being a fireman, and was employed at Drury Lane theatre; where another relation of Poll's, I think his little sister, did imps in the pantomimes.

"No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship; compared these every-day associates with those of my happier childhood; and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more, can not be written. My

whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man, and wander desolately back to that time of my life.

"My mother and my brothers and sisters (excepting Fanny in the Royal Academy of Music) were still encamped, with a young servant-girl from Chatham workhouse, in the two parlors in the emptied house in Gower Street north. It was a long way to go and return within the dinner-hour, and usually I either carried my dinner with me, or went and bought it at some neighboring shop. In the latter case, it was commonly a saveloy and a penny loaf; sometimes, a fourpenny plate of beef from a cook's shop; sometimes, a plate of bread and cheese, and a glass of beer, from a miserable old public-house over the way, the Swan, if I remember right, or the Swan and something else that I have forgotten. Once, I remember tucking my own bread (which I had brought from home in the morning) under my arm, wrapped up in a piece of paper like a book, and going into the best dining-room in Johnson's alamode beef-house in Charles Court, Drury Lane, and magnificently ordering a small plate of alamode beef to eat with it. What the waiter thought of such a strange little apparition, coming in all alone, I don't know; but I can see him now, staring at me as I ate my dinner, and bringing up the other waiter to look. I gave him a halfpenny, and I wish, now, that he hadn't taken it."

I lose here for a little while the fragment of direct narrative, but I perfectly recollect that he used to describe Saturday night as his great treat. It was a grand thing to walk home with six shillings in his pocket, and

to look in at the shop-windows and think what it would buy. Hunt's roasted corn, as a British and patriotic substitute for coffee, was in great vogue just then; and the little fellow used to buy it, and roast it on the Sunday. There was a cheap periodical of selected pieces called the "Portfolio," which he had also a great fancy for taking home with him. The new proposed "deed," meanwhile, had failed to propitiate his father's creditors; all hope of arrangement passed away; and the end was that his mother and her encampment in Gower Street north broke up and went to live in the Marshalsea. I am able at this point to resume his own account.

"The key of the house was sent back to the landlord, who was very glad to get it; and I (small Cain that I was, except that I had never done harm to any one) was handed over as a lodger to a reduced old lady, long known to our family, in Little College Street, Camdentown, who took children in to board, and had once done so at Brighton; and who, with a few alterations and embellishments, unconsciously began to sit for Mrs. Pipchin in 'Dombey' when she took in me.

"She had a little brother and sister under her care then; somebody's natural children, who were very irregularly paid for; and a widow's little son. The two boys and I slept in the same room. My own exclusive breakfast, of a penny cottage loaf and a pennyworth of milk, I provided for myself. I kept another small loaf, and a quarter of a pound of cheese, on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard, to make my supper on when I came back at night. They made a hole in the six or seven shillings, I know well; and I was out at the blacking-warehouse all day, and had to support myself upon that money all the week. I suppose my lodging was

paid for by my father. I certainly did not pay it myself; and I certainly had no other assistance whatever (the making of my clothes, I think, excepted) from Monday morning until Saturday night. No advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no support, from any one that I can call to mind, so help me God.

"Sundays, Fanny and I passed in the prison. I was at the Academy in Tenterden Street, Hanover Square, at nine o'clock in the morning, to fetch her; and we walked back there together at night.

"I was so young and childish, and so little qualified —how could I be otherwise?—to undertake the whole charge of my own existence, that, in going to Hungerford Stairs of a morning, I could not resist the stale pastry put out at half price on trays at the confectioners' doors in Tottenham Court Road; and I often spent in that the money I should have kept for my dinner. Then I went without my dinner, or bought a roll or a slice of pudding. There were two pudding-shops between which I was divided, according to my finances. One was in a court close to St. Martin's Church (at the back of the church), which is now removed altogether. The pudding at that shop was made with currants, and was rather a special pudding, but was dear: two penn'orth not being larger than a penn'orth of more ordinary pudding. A good shop for the latter was in the Strand, somewhere near where the Lowther Arcade is now. It was a stout, hale pudding, heavy and flabby; with great raisins in it, stuck in whole, at great distances apart. It came up hot, at about noon every day; and many and many a day did I dine off it.

"We had half an hour, I think, for tea. When I

had money enough, I used to go to a coffee-shop, and have half a pint of coffee, and a slice of bread and butter. When I had no money, I took a turn in Covent Garden market, and stared at the pineapples. The coffee-shops to which I most resorted were, one in Maiden Lane, one in a court (non-existent now) close to Hungerford Market, and one in St. Martin's Lane, of which I only recollect that it stood near the church, and that in the door there was an oval glass-plate, with COFFEE-ROOM painted on it, addressed toward the street. If I ever find myself in a very different kind of coffee-room now, but where there is such an inscription on glass, and read it backward on the wrong side MOOR-EEFFOC (as I often used to do then, in a dismal reverie), a shock goes through my blood.

"I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by any one, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through, by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting-house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount and labeled with a different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

"But I held some station at the blacking-warehouse too. Besides that my relative at the counting-house did what a man so occupied, and dealing with a thing so

anomalous, could, to treat me as one upon a different footing from the rest, I never said, to man or boy, how it was that I came to be there, or gave the least indication of being sorry that I was there. That I suffered in secret, and that I suffered exquisitely, no one ever knew but I. How much I suffered, it is, as I have said already, utterly beyond my power to tell. No man's imagination can overstep the reality. But I kept my own counsel, and I did my work. I knew from the first that, if I could not do my work as well as any of the rest, I could not hold myself above slight and contempt. I soon bebecame at least as expeditious and as skillful with my hands as either of the other boys. Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manners were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They, and the men, always spoke of me as 'the young gentleman.' A certain man (a soldier once), named Thomas, who was the foreman, and another named Harry, who was the carman and wore a red jacket, used to call me 'Charles' sometimes, in speaking to me; but I think it was mostly when we were very confidential, and when I had made some efforts to entertain them over our work with the results of some of the old readings, which were fast perishing out of my mind. Poll Green uprose once, and rebelled against the 'young gentleman' usage; but Bob Fagin settled him speedily.

"My rescue from this kind of existence I considered quite hopeless, and abandoned as such, altogether; though I am solemnly convinced that I never, for one hour, was reconciled to it, or was otherwise than miserably unhappy. I felt keenly, however, the being so cut off from my parents, my brothers and sisters, and, when my day's work was done, going home to such a miserable

blank; and *that*, I thought, might be corrected. One Sunday night I remonstrated with my father on this head, so pathetically, and with so many tears, that his kind nature gave way. He began to think that it was not quite right. I do believe he had never thought so before, or thought about it. It was the first remonstrance I had ever made about my lot, and perhaps it opened up a little more than I intended. A back attic was found for me at the house of an insolvent-court agent, who lived in Lant Street in the Borough, where Bob Sawyer lodged many years afterward. A bed and bedding were sent over for me, and made up on the floor. The little window had a pleasant prospect of a timber-yard; and when I took possession of my new abode I thought it was a Paradise."

There is here another blank, which it is, however, not difficult to supply from letters and recollections of my own. What was to him of course the great pleasure of his paradise of a lodging was its bringing him again, though after a fashion sorry enough, within the circle of home. From this time he used to breakfast "at home,"—in other words, in the Marshalsea; going to it as early as the gates were open, and for the most part much earlier. They had no want of bodily comforts there. His father's income, still going on, was amply sufficient for that; and in every respect indeed but elbow-room, I have heard him say, the family lived more comfortably in prison than they had done for a long time out of it. They were waited on still by the maid-of-all-work from Bayham Street, the orphan girl of the Chatham workhouse, from whose sharp little worldly and also kindly ways he took his first impression of the Marchioness in the "Old Curiosity Shop." She also

had a lodging in the neighborhood, that she might be early on the scene of her duties; and when Charles met her, as he would do occasionally, in his lounging-place by London Bridge, he would occupy the time before the gates opened by telling her quite astonishing fictions about the wharves and the tower. "But I hope I believed them myself," he would say. Besides breakfast, he had supper also in the prison, and got to his lodging generally at 9 o'clock. The gates closed always at ten.

I must not omit what he told me of the landlord of this little lodging. He was a fat, good-natured, kind old gentleman. He was lame, and had a quiet old wife; and he had a very innocent grown-up son, who was lame too. They were all very kind to the boy. He was taken with one of his old attacks of spasm one night, and the whole three of them were about his bed until morning. They were all dead when he told me this; but in another form they still live very pleasantly as the Garland family in the "Old Curiosity Shop."

He had a similar illness one day in the warehouse, which I can describe in his own words: "Bob Fagin was very good to me on the occasion of a bad attack of my old disorder. I suffered such excruciating pain that time, that they made a temporary bed of straw in my old recess in the counting-house, and I rolled about on the floor, and Bob filled empty blacking-bottles with hot water, and applied relays of them to my side, half the day. I got better, and quite easy toward evening; but Bob (who was much bigger and older than I) did not like the idea of my going home alone, and took me under his protection. I was too proud to let him know about the prison, and after making several efforts to get rid of him, to all of which Bob Fagin in his good-

ness was deaf, shook hands with him on the steps of a house near Southwark Bridge on the Surrey side, making believe that I lived there. As a finishing piece of reality in case of his looking back, I knocked at the door, I recollect, and asked, when the woman opened it, if that was Mr. Robert Fagin's house.

"My usual way home was over Blackfriars Bridge, and down that turning in the Blackfriars Road which has Rowland Hill's chapel on one side, and the likeness of a golden dog licking a golden pot over a shop-door on the other. There are a good many little low-browed old shops in that street, of a wretched kind; and some are unchanged now. I looked into one a few weeks ago, where I used to buy boot-laces on Saturday nights, and saw the corner where I once sat down on a stool to have a pair of ready-made half-boots fitted on. I have been seduced more than once in that street on a Saturday night, by a show-van at the corner; and have gone in, with a very motley assemblage, to see the Fat-pig, the Wild-indian, and the Little-lady. There were two or three hat-manufactories there then (I think they are there still); and among the things which, encountered anywhere or under any circumstances, will instantly recall that time, is the smell of hat-making."

His father's attempts to avoid going through the court having failed, all needful ceremonies had to be undertaken to obtain the benefit of the insolvent debtors' act; and in one of these little Charles had his part to play. One condition of the statute was that the wearing-apparel and personal matters retained were not to exceed twenty pounds sterling in value. "It was necessary, as a matter of form, that the clothes I wore should be seen by the official appraiser. I had a half-holiday

to enable me to call upon him, at his own time, at a house somewhere beyond the Obelisk. I recollect his coming out to look at me with his mouth full, and a strong smell of beer upon him, and saying good naturedly that 'that would do,' and 'it was allright.' Certainly the hardest creditor would not have been disposed (even if he had been legally entitled) to avail himself of my poor white hat, little jacket, or corduroy trowsers. But I had a fat old silver watch in my pocket, which had been given me by my grandmother before the blacking-days, and I had entertained my doubts as I went along whether that valuable possession might not bring me over the twenty pounds. So I was greatly relieved, and made him a bow of acknowledgment as I went out."

Still, the want felt most by him was the companionship of boys of his own age. He had no such acquaintance. Sometimes he remembered to have played on the coal-barges at dinner-time, with Poll Green and Bob Fagin; but those were rare occasions. He generally strolled alone, about the back streets of the Adelphi, or explored the Adelphi arches. One of his favorite localities was a little public-house by the waterside, approached by an underground passage, called the Fox-under-the-hill, which we once vainly looked for together; and he had a vision which he has mentioned in "Copperfield" of sitting eating something on a bench outside, one fine evening, and looking at some coal-heavers dancing before the house. "I wonder what they thought of me," says David. He had himself already said the same in his fragment of autobiography.

Another characteristic little incident he made afterward one of David's experiences, but I am able to give

it here without the disguises that adapt it to the fiction: "I was such a little fellow, with my poor white hat, little jacket, and corduroy trousers, that frequently, when I went into the bar of a strange public-house for a glass of ale or porter to wash down the saveloy and the loaf I had eaten in the street, they didn't like to give it me. I remember, one evening (I had been somewhere for my father, and was going back to the Borough over Westminster Bridge), that I went into a public-house in Parliament Street—which is still there, though altered—at the corner of the short street leading into Cannon Row, and said to the landlord behind the bar, 'What is your very best—the VERY *best*—ale, a glass?' For the occasion was a festive one, for some reason: I forget why. It may have been my birthday, or somebody else's. 'Twopence,' says he. 'Then,' says I, 'just draw me a glass of that, if you please, with a good head to it.' The landlord looked at me, in return, over the bar, from head to foot, with a strange smile on his face, and, instead of drawing the beer, looked round the screen and said something to his wife, who came out from behind it, with her work in her hand, and joined him in surveying me. Here we stand, all three, before me now, in my study in Devonshire Terrace. The landlord, in his shirt-sleeves, leaning against the bar window-frame; his wife, looking over the little half-door; and I, in some confusion, looking up at them from outside the partition. They asked me a good many questions, as what my name was, how old I was, where I lived, how I was employed, etc., etc. To all of which, that I might commit nobody, I invented appropriate answers. They served me with the ale, though I suspect it was not the strongest on the premises; and the landlord's wife, opening the little half-

door and bending down, gave me a kiss that was half admiring and half compassionate, but all womanly and good, I am sure." . . .

When the family left the Marshalsea they all went to lodge with the lady in Little College Street, a Mrs. Roylance, who has obtained unexpected immortality as Mrs. Pipchin; and they afterward occupied a small house in Somers-town. But, before this time, Charles was present with some of them in Tenterden Street to see his sister. Fanny received one of the prizes given to the pupils of the Royal Academy of Music. "I could not bear to think of myself—beyond the reach of all such honorable emulation and success. The tears ran down my face. I felt as if my heart were rent. I prayed, when I went to bed that night, to be lifted out of the humiliation and neglect in which I was. I never had suffered so much before. There was no envy in this.

"I am not sure that it was before this time, or after it, that the blacking-warehouse was removed to Chandos Street, Covent Garden. It is no matter. Next to the shop, at the corner of Bedford Street in Chandos Street, are two rather old-fashioned houses and shops adjoining one another. They were one then, or thrown into one, for the blacking business, and had been a butter-shop. Opposite to them was and is a public-house, where I got my ale under these new circumstances. The stones in the street may be smoothed by my small feet going across to it at dinner-time, and back again. The establishment was larger now, and we had one or two new boys. Bob Fagin and I had attained to great dexterity in tying up the pots. I forget how many we could do in five minutes. We worked, for the light's sake, near the second window as you come from Bed-

ford Street; and we were so brisk at it that the people used to stop and look in. Sometimes there would be quite a little crowd there. I saw my father coming in at the door one day when we were very busy, and I wondered how he could bear it.

"Now, I generally had my dinner in the warehouse. Sometimes I brought it from home, so I was better off. I see myself coming across Russell Square from Somerstown, one morning, with some cold hotch-potch in a small basin tied up in a handkerchief. I had the same wanderings about the streets as I used to have, and was just as solitary and self-dependent as before; but I had not the same difficulty in merely living. I never, however, heard a word of being taken away, or of being otherwise than quite provided for.

"At last, one day, my father and the relative so often mentioned quarreled; quarreled by letter (for I took the letter from my father to him which caused the explosion), but quarreled very fiercely. It was about me. It may have had some backward reference, in part, for anything I know, to my employment at the window. All I am certain of is that, soon after I had given him the letter, my cousin (he was a sort of cousin by marriage) told me he was very much insulted about me, and that it was impossible to keep me after that. I cried very much, partly because it was so sudden, and partly because in his anger he was violent about my father though gentle to me. Thomas, the old soldier, comforted me, and said he was sure it was for the best. With a relief so strange that it was like oppression, I went home.

"My mother set herself to accommodate the quarrel, and did so next day. She brought home a request for

me to return next morning, and a high character of me, which I am very sure I deserved. My father said I should go back no more, and should go to school. I do not write resentfully or angrily; for I know how all these things have worked together to make me what I am; but I never afterward forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back.

"From that hour until this at which I write, no word of that part of my childhood which I have now gladly brought to a close has passed my lips to any human being. I have no idea how long it lasted; whether for a year, or much more, or less. From that hour until this my father and my mother have been stricken dumb upon it. I have never heard the least allusion to it, however far off and remote, from either of them. I have never, until I now impart it to this paper, in any burst of confidence with any one, my own wife not excepted, raised the curtain I then dropped, thank God.

"Until old Hungerford Market was pulled down, until old Hungerford Stairs were destroyed, and the very nature of the ground changed, I never had the courage to go back to the place where my servitude began. I never saw it. I could not endure to go near it. For many years, when I came near to Robert Warren's in the Strand, I crossed over to the opposite side of the way, to avoid a certain smell of the cement they put upon the blacking-corks, which reminded me of what I was once. It was a very long time before I liked to go up Chandos Street. My old way home by the Borough made me cry, after my eldest child could speak.

"In my walks at night I have walked there often, since then, and by degrees I have come to write this.

It does not seem a tithe of what I might have written, or of what I meant to write."

It would be difficult to imagine anything more intense and touching than this, and no record of Dickens's life would be even fairly adequate which should omit to give it in full; yet it must be admitted, we think, that the tragic tone in which he relates it is somewhat disproportioned to the actual fact. Surely it was no very extraordinary incident for a boy of ten or eleven to be set at some self-supporting work, whose father was in jail for debt and whose mother with the younger children was "camped out" in the parlor of a furnitureless house; nor is it the most pleasing feature of Dickens's character that he cherished a feeling of something like resentment toward his parents for what was at least as much a misfortune as a fault. Indeed, the only thing that gives the episode any special significance is the fact that it affected the sensitive, imaginative child so painfully at the time and left its impress upon his character throughout his life.

Dickens was twelve years old when the above-mentioned episode came to a close, and the remaining incidents of his youth were of a somewhat commonplace character and may be more briefly recounted. For about two years after his rescue from the blacking-business he went as day-scholar to the Wellington House Academy, in Mornington Place, which was considered the best

school in that part of London. A graphic sketch of it, written by Dickens in 1851 and entitled "Our School," appears in his works among the pieces reprinted from "Household Words"; and it will be seen from that sketch that, however attractive the school may have been in other respects, it was not a place at which any superfluous amount of knowledge was likely to be acquired.

A schoolmate of Dickens at this time (Mr. Owen P. Thomas) describes him as "a healthy-looking boy, small but well built, with a more than usual flow of spirits, inducing to harmless fun, seldom or never to mischief, to which so many lads at that age are prone. I can not recall anything that then indicated he would hereafter become a literary celebrity; but perhaps he was too young then. He usually held his head more erect than lads ordinarily do, and there was a general smartness about him. . . . He invented what we termed a 'lingo,' produced by the addition of a few letters of the same sound to every word; and it was our ambition, walking and talking thus along the street, to be considered foreigners."

Another schoolmate (Dr. Henry Dawson) furnished Mr. Forster with some more detailed reminiscences from which we may make a few extracts:

"Dickens has given a very lively account of this place [the Academy] in his paper entitled Our School, but it is very mythical in many respects, and more

especially in the compliment he pays in it to himself. I do not remember that Dickens distinguished himself in any way, or carried off any prizes. My belief is that he did not learn Greek or Latin there; and you will remember there is no allusion to the classics in any of his writings. He was a handsome curly-headed lad, full of animation and animal spirits, and probably was connected with every mischievous prank in the school. . . . Depend on it, he was quite a self-made man, and his wonderful knowledge and command of the English language must have been acquired by long and patient study after leaving his last school." . . .

"I think at that time Dickens took to writing small tales, and we had a sort of club for lending and circulating them. Dickens was also very strong in using a sort of lingo, which made us quite unintelligible to bystanders. We were very strong, too, in theatricals. We mounted small theatres, and got up very gorgeous scenery to illustrate the 'Miller and his Men' and 'Cherry and Fair Star.' I remember the present Mr. Beverley, the scene painter, assisted us in this. Dickens was always a leader at these plays, which were occasionally presented with much solemnity before an audience of boys and in the presence of the ushers. My brother, assisted by Dickens, got up the 'Miller and his Men' in a very gorgeous form. Master Beverley constructed the mill for us in such a way that it could tumble to pieces with the assistance of crackers. At one representation the fireworks in the last scene, ending with the destruction of the mill, were so very real that the police interfered and knocked violently at the doors. Dickens's after-taste for theatricals might have had its origin in these small affairs.

"I quite remember Dickens on one occasion heading us in Drummond Street in pretending to be poor boys, and asking the passers-by for charity—especially old ladies, one of whom told us she 'had no money for beggar-boys.' On these adventures, when the old ladies were quite staggered by the impudence of the demand, Dickens would explode with laughter and take to his heels."

A few months after leaving school, Dickens obtained employment as attorney's clerk with a friend of the family, Mr. Edward Blackmore, then in practice in Gray's Inn, remaining with him from May, 1827, to November, 1828, with the modest salary first of thirteen shillings and sixpence and afterward of fifteen shillings a week. As a preparation for his future work probably no portion of his life was more fruitful than this brief period spent with Mr. Blackmore; and, as Mr. Forster observes, "in the earliest of his writings, and down to the very latest, he worked exhaustively the field which is opened by an attorney's office to the student of life and manners."

At the time, however, he did not much like it, and after eighteen months' trial he abandoned the law and applied himself (as he says in a letter to Mr. Wilkie Collins, written in 1856) "with a celestial or diabolical energy to the study of such things as would qualify me to be a first-rate parliamentary reporter—at that time a calling pursued by many clever men who were young at the Bar."

II.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTER.

The most important influence probably in deciding Dickens to choose the career of a newspaper parliamentary reporter was the fact that his father had taken it up in these latter years, and that it was certain to yield a fair income to such talents as he possessed. Whatever may have been the motive, however, he abandoned his attorney's clerkship, and for a period of nearly eighteen months devoted himself with characteristic energy to acquiring "a perfect and entire command of the mystery of shorthand writing and reading," which he subsequently declared to be "about equal in difficulty to the mastery of six languages." The "distractions" which David Copperfield is represented as having encountered at this stage of his career were transcribed from the experience of Dickens himself, and may be reproduced here as part of the story of his own life: "The changes that were rung upon dots, which in such a position meant such a thing, and in such another position something else entirely different; the wonderful vagaries that were played by circles; the unaccountable consequences that resulted from marks like flies' legs; the tremendous effects of a curve in a wrong place; not only troubled my waking hours, but

reappeared before me in my sleep. When I had groped my way, blindly, through these difficulties, and had mastered the alphabet, there then appeared a procession of new horrors, called arbitrary characters; the most despotic characters I have ever known, who insisted, for instance, that a thing like the beginning of a cobweb meant expectation, and that a pen-and-ink sky-rocket stood for disadvantageous. When I had fixed these wretches in my mind, I found that they had driven everything else out of it; then, beginning again, I forgot them; while I was picking them up, I dropped the other fragments of the system: in short, it was almost heart-breaking."

But, exacting and baffling as the study of short-hand was, Dickens, while engaged in it, addressed himself also to the additional task of acquiring such general information about books as a fairly-educated youth might be expected to have; and for this purpose spent much of his time in the reading-room of the British Museum. "He would frequently," says Mr. Forster, "refer to these days as decidedly the usefullest to himself he had ever passed; and, judging from the results, they must have been so. No man who knew him in later years, and talked to him familiarly of books and things, would have suspected his education in boyhood, almost entirely self-acquired as it was, to have been so rambling or haphazard as I have here described it. The secret

consisted in this, that, whatever for the time he had to do, he lifted himself, there and then, to the level of, and at no time disregarded the rules that guided the hero of his novel. 'Whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well. What I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw my whole self, and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find now to have been my golden rules.'"

Long afterward Dickens confessed to Mr. Forster that, as with the imaginary Copperfield, so with himself, there was at this period a Dora, the thought of whom sustained him through all discouragements, and inspired him "with a determination to overcome all the difficulties." In the real life, however, Dora was not won; neither did she die. Unhappily for the youthful romance, she lived to meet in mature life her quondam worshiper, and to sit for the portrait of Flora in "Little Dorrit."

Even when he had mastered the mystery of shorthand and otherwise qualified himself for his work, Dickens was unable to secure the employment which he sought; and he was obliged "to pass nearly two years as a reporter for one of the offices in Doctors' Commons, practicing in this and other law courts, before he became a sharer in the parliamentary toils and triumphs." So dis-

couraged was he at this time that he came very near committing himself to a career which, whatever compensations it might have afforded, would probably have lost him irretrievably to literature. There are few more interesting passages in his early life than that recorded in the following letter, written from Italy to Mr. Forster in 1845 :

" . . . I do not know if I have ever told you seriously, but I have often thought that I should certainly have been as successful on the boards as I have been between them. I assure you, when I was on the stage at Montreal * (not having played for years) I was as much astonished at the reality and ease, to myself, of what I did as if I had been another man. See how oddly things come about! When I was about twenty, and knew three or four successive years of Mathews's At Homes from sitting in the pit to hear them, I wrote to Bartley, who was stage-manager at Covent Garden, and told him how young I was, and exactly what I thought I could do; and that I believed I had a strong perception of character and oddity, and a natural power of reproducing in my own person what I observed in others. There must have been something in the letter that struck the authorities, for Bartley wrote to me, almost immediately, to say that they were busy getting up 'The Hunchback' (so they were!) but that they would communicate with me again, in a fortnight. Punctual to the time, another letter came: with an appointment to do anything of Mathews's I pleased, before him and Charles Kemble, on a certain day at the theatre. My sister Fanny was in the secret, and was to go with me to play the songs.

* See chapter on first American visit.

I was laid up, when the day came, with a terrible bad cold and an inflammation of the face; the beginning, by the bye, of that annoyance in one ear to which I am subject at this day. I wrote to say so, and added that I would resume my application next season. I made a great splash in the gallery soon afterward; the 'Chronicle' opened to me; I had a distinction in the little world of the newspaper, which made me like it; began to write; didn't want money; had never thought of the stage, but as a means of getting it; gradually left off turning my thoughts that way; and never resumed the idea. I never told you this, did I? See how near I may have been to another sort of life.

"This was at the time when I was at Doctors' Commons as a shorthand writer for the proctors. And I recollect I wrote the letter from a little office I had there, where the answer came also. It wasn't a very good living (though not a *very* bad one), and was wearily uncertain; which made me think of the Theatre in quite a business-like way. I went to some theatre every night, with a very few exceptions, for at least three years: really studying the bills first, and going to where there was the best acting; and always to see Mathews whenever he played. I practiced immensely (even such things as walking in and out, and sitting down in a chair): often four, five, six hours a day: shut up in my own room, or walking about in the fields. I prescribed to myself, too, a sort of Hamiltonian system for learning parts; and learnt a great number. I haven't even lost the habit now, for I knew my Canadian parts immediately, though they were new to me."

The opportunity for the "splash in the gallery" above referred to was afforded him in 1832 by a connection which he formed with "The True Sun"; and that he speedily took a prominent position is proved by the fact that on the occasion of a strike of the reporters "young Dickens" was selected as their spokesman, and "conducted their case triumphantly." Afterward during two sessions he worked for the "Mirror of Parliament," which was originated and conducted by one of his uncles, and which aimed to excel "Hansard" in giving verbatim reports of the debates. Finally, in 1834, he obtained an engagement on the "Morning Chronicle," then a journal of high literary reputation and great political influence.

A co-worker with him in the gallery, Mr. James Grant, the well-known journalist and author, has said that of the eighty or ninety reporters for the press then in Parliament Dickens occupied the very highest rank, being remarkable not merely for accuracy in reporting, but for marvelous quickness in transcribing. "While in the gallery of the House of Commons," continues Mr. Grant, "he was exceedingly reserved in his manners. Though interchanging the usual courtesies of life with all with whom he came into contact in the discharge of his professional duties, the only gentleman at that time in the gallery of the House of Commons with whom he formed a close personal intimacy was Mr. Thomas Beard,

then a reporter for the "Morning Herald." The acquaintance with Mr. Beard dated back to 1832, and continued until Dickens's death, and Mr. Beard used to say of his friend that "there never *was* such a shorthand writer." And his services were duly appreciated in the proper quarter. In a letter (written in 1845) Dickens says :

"There never was anybody connected with newspapers who, in the same space of time, had so much express and post-chaise experience as I. And what gentlemen they were to serve, in such things, at the old 'Morning Chronicle'! Great or small it did not matter. I have had to charge for half a dozen breakdowns in half a dozen times as many miles. I have had to charge for the damage of a great-coat from the drippings of a blazing wax candle, in riding through the smallest hours of the night in a swift-flying carriage-and-pair. I have had to charge for all sorts of breakages fifty times in a journey without question, such being the ordinary results of the pace which we went at. I have charged for broken hats, broken luggage, broken chaises, broken harness—everything but a broken head, which is the only thing they would have grumbled to pay for."

Again, in a speech delivered at the second annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund, in 1865, he gave a picturesque summary of his whole reporting life :

"I am not here," he said, "advocating the cause of a mere ordinary client of whom I have little or no knowledge. I hold a brief to-night for my brothers. I

went into the gallery of the House of Commons as a parlimentary reporter when I was a boy, and I left it—I can hardly believe the inexorable truth—nigh thirty years ago. I have pursued the calling of a reporter under circumstances of which many of my brethren here can form no adequate conception. I have often transcribed for the printer, from my shorthand notes, important public speeches in which the strictest accuracy was required, and a mistake in which would have been to a young man severely compromising, writing on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark-lantern, in a postchaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of night, at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour. The very last time I was in Exeter, I strolled into the castle-yard there to indentify, for the amusement of a friend, the spot on which I once 'took,' as we used to call it, an election speech of Lord John Russell at the Devon contest, in the midst of a lively fight maintained by all the vagabonds in that division of the county, and under such a pelting rain that I remember two good-natured colleagues, who chanced to be at leisure, held a pocket-handkerchief over my note-book, after the manner of a state canopy in an ecclesiastical procession. I have worn my knees by writing on them on the old back row of the old gallery of the old House of Commons; and I have worn my feet by standing to write in a preposterous pen in the old House of Lords, where we used to be huddled together like so many sheep—kept in waiting, say, until the woolsack might want restuffing. Returning home from exciting political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known

in this country. I have been, in my time, belated on miry by-roads, toward the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage, with exhausted horses and drunken post-boys, and have got back in time for publication, to be received with never-forgotten compliments by the late Mr. Black, coming in the broadest of Scotch from the broadest of hearts I ever knew. These trivial things I mention as an assurance to you that I never have forgotten the fascination of that old pursuit. The pleasure that I used to feel in the rapidity and dexterity of its exercise has never faded out of my breast. Whatever little cunning of hand or head I took to it, or acquired in it, I have so retained as that I fully believe I could resume it to-morrow, very little the worse from long disuse. To this present year of my life, when I sit in this hall, or where not, hearing a dull speech (the phenomenon does occur), I sometimes beguile the tedium of the moment by mentally following the speaker in the old, old way; and sometimes, if you can believe me, I even find my hand going on the table-cloth, taking an imaginary note of it all."

Still later, at the farewell dinner given him by the New York editors, he said: "To the wholesome training of severe newspaper work, when I was a very young man, I constantly refer my first successes."

It was these first successes, however, that put an end to his work as a reporter; and he retained his position on the "Morning Chronicle" until several numbers of "Pickwick" had been published. But this will form the subject of our

next chapter, and it only remains to be added here that he left the gallery with a rooted feeling of contempt for the House of Commons which often afterward found expression. When he had become famous as an author, he peremptorily declined several invitations to become a member of it, and on one of these occasions wrote: "I declare that, as to all matters on the face of this teeming earth, it appears to me that the House of Commons and Parliament altogether is become just the dreariest failure and nuisance that ever bothered this much-bothered world." On another occasion (in 1854), having been presented by a friend with tickets of admission to the ceremony of the opening of Parliament by the Queen, he returned them with the following comments: "Though reasonably loyal, I do not care much for such sights, and consequently feel that you ought to bestow the places you so obligingly offer me on some more deserving object. The last ceremony of that kind I ever saw was the Queen's coronation, and I thought it looked poor in comparison with my usual country walk. As to Parliament, it does so little and talks so much that the most interesting ceremony I know of in connection with it was performed (with very little state indeed) by one man, who just cleared it out, locked up the place, and put the keys in his pocket."

III.

FIRST ATTEMPTS AT AUTHORSHIP.

In one of his later letters, Dickens remarks that he had been a writer when he was a mere baby, and we have shown that the taste manifested itself from time to time during his childhood and youth; but the momentous step that first launched him on the career of authorship was taken when, at the age of twenty-one, he wrote a sketch which was accepted and published by the "Old Monthly Magazine." This sketch appeared in the number of the magazine for January, 1834, and was called "A Dinner at Poplar Walk," though the title was afterward changed to "Mr. Minns and his Cousin," under which it appears in the collected "Sketches." The author has described how this his first effusion was "dropped stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark letter-box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street"; and how, when he had bought the first copy of the magazine in which it appeared in all the glory of print, he "walked down to Westminster Hall, and turned into it for half an hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride that they could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there."

Following this first paper, nine others appeared in the same magazine, the last in the number for

February, 1835. Most of these sketches were published anonymously, but to the second part or chapter of "The Boarding House," which appeared in the number for August, 1834, was attached the signature "Boz." In the preface to the first cheap edition of "Pickwick" (1847) Dickens thus described the origin of this signature: "'Boz' was the nickname of a pet child, a younger brother, whom I had dubbed Moses, in honor of the Vicar of Wakefield; which, being facetiously pronounced through the nose, became Boses, and being shortened became Boz. 'Boz' was a very familiar household word to me long before I was an author, and so I came to adopt it."

Flattered by the opportunity of appearing "in the glory of print," Dickens had neither received nor asked payment for the earlier sketches contributed to the "Old Monthly Magazine"; but toward the end of 1834 he wrote to the editor announcing that he should be obliged to discontinue them unless they should be thought "worthy of some slight remuneration." The condition of the magazine was so discouraging that the editor was unable to pay for articles, however worthy he might think them, so that with the number for February, 1835, as already told, the "Sketches by Boz" ceased to appear.

In the mean time Dickens had secured his place upon the staff of the "Morning Chronicle,"

and before the appearance of the above-mentioned February number a new opening for the "Sketches" had been found. Says Mr. Forster:

"An evening offshoot to the 'Morning Chronicle' had been lately in hand; and to a countryman of Black's engaged in the preparations for it, Mr. George Hogarth, Dickens was communicating from his rooms in Furnival's Inn, on the evening of Tuesday, the 20th of January, 1835, certain hopes and fancies he had formed. This was the beginning of his knowledge of an accomplished and kindly man, with whose family his relations were soon to become so intimate as to have an influence on all his future career. Mr. Hogarth had asked him, as a favor to himself, to write an original sketch for the first number of the enterprise, and in writing back to say with what readiness he should comply, and how anxiously he should desire to do his best for the person who had made the request, he mentioned what had arisen in his mind. It had occurred to him that he might not be unreasonably or improperly trespassing further on Mr. Hogarth if, trusting to his kindness to refer the application to the proper quarter, he begged to ask whether it was probable, if he commenced a regular series of articles under some attractive title for the 'Evening Chronicle,' its conductors would think he had any claim to *some* additional remuneration (of course, of no great amount) for doing so. In short, he wished to put it to the proprietors—first, whether a continuation of some chapters of light papers in the style of his street-sketches would be considered of use to the new journal; and, secondly, if so, whether they would not think it fair and reasonable that, taking his share of the ordinary reporting

business of the 'Chronicle' besides, he should receive something for the papers beyond his ordinary salary as a reporter. The request was thought fair, he began the sketches, and his salary was raised from five to seven guineas a week."

The Mr. Black referred to in the foregoing passage was editor of the "Morning Chronicle," and he is said to have been perhaps the first to discover and appreciate Dickens's talents as a writer. Dr. Charles Mackay, who was sub-editor of the "Chronicle" when Dickens was a reporter, says: "I have often heard Black speak of him, and predict his future fame. When Dickens had become famous, Black exerted all his influence with the proprietors to have Dickens engaged as a writer of leading articles. He (Black) had his wish, and Dickens wrote several articles; but he did not seem to take kindly to such work, and did not long continue at it."

The "Boz" sketches were continued at regular intervals throughout the year, and, though they did not become the rage of the general public, they attracted the attention of the literary circles of the day, and Dickens began to be spoken of among his colleagues as a man of mark. Early in 1836 he attained the dignity of his first book, having sold the copyright of the First Series of "Sketches by Boz," for a conditional payment of one hundred and fifty pounds, to a young publisher named John Macrone. They were issued

in two octavo volumes, containing thirty-five articles, with sixteen illustrations by George Cruikshank. The preface to the first edition was dated "Furnival's Inn, February, 1836," and the same year a second edition was published with a preface dated "Furnival's Inn, 1st August, 1836."

But before the appearance of either edition another arrangement had been entered upon, the result of which decided Dickens's subsequent career, and made a permanent contribution to what Dr. Johnson called "the gayety of nations." The story of the origin of the "Pickwick Papers" has been often told, and is among the best known, probably, in the history of literature; but custom can hardly stale the interest which it arouses. It appears that a young publishing house (Messrs. Chapman & Hall) had recently started a Library of Fiction, which was designed to contain contributions from the more prominent writers of the time; and, in pursuance of their scheme, enlisted the services, among others, of the author of the "Boz" sketches, who was then beginning to be talked about. In response to their invitation he wrote for them "The Tuggs's at Ramsgate"; and shortly afterward he was visited by a member of the firm, who laid before him a scheme intended to combine his graphic pen with the equally graphic pencil of Mr. Seymour, the sporting artist. Dickens has himself described what passed at the interview:

"When I opened my door in Furnival's Inn to the partner who represented the firm, I recognized in him the person from whose hands I had bought, two or three years previously, and whom I had never seen before or since, my first copy of the magazine in which my first effusion appeared. . . . I told my visitor of the coincidence, which we both hailed as a good omen, and so fell to business. The idea propounded to me was that the monthly something should be a vehicle for certain plates to be executed by Mr. Seymour; and there was a notion, either on the part of that admirable humorous artist, or of my visitor, that a NIMROD CLUB, the members of which were to go out shooting, fishing, and so forth, and getting themselves into difficulties through their want of dexterity, would be the best means of introducing these. I objected, on consideration that, although born and partly bred in the country, I was no great sportsman, except in regard to all kinds of locomotion; that the idea was not novel, and had already been much used; that it would be infinitely better for the plates to arise naturally out of the text; and that I would like to take my own way, with a freer range of English scenes and people, and was afraid I should ultimately do so in any case, whatever course I might prescribe to myself at starting. My views being deferred to, I thought of Mr. Pickwick, and wrote the first number; from the proof-sheets of which Mr. Seymour made his drawing of the club and his happy portrait of its founder. I connected Mr. Pickwick with a club, because of the original suggestion; and I put in Mr. Winkle expressly for the use of Mr. Seymour. We started with a number of twenty-four pages instead of thirty-two, and four illustrations in lieu of a couple. Mr. Seymour's sudden and

lamented death, before the second number was published, brought about a quick decision upon a point already in agitation; the number became one of thirty-two pages with only two illustrations, and remained so to the end."

A few more items concerning the origin of "Pickwick" may be inserted here. The name is said to have been taken from a coach-maker at Bath, whose name Dickens had seen painted on a coach, and then and there copied into his note-book. The figure of Mr. Pickwick, which did so much at the outset to make him a reality, was claimed by Mr. Edward Chapman, senior member of the publishing firm. "Seymour's first sketch," he said, "was of a long, thin man. The present immortal one he made from my description of a friend of mine at Richmond, a fat old beau, who would wear, in spite of the ladies' protests, drab tights and black gaiters. His name was John Foster."

One other fact connected with the illustrations to "Pickwick" is interesting. Mr. Seymour having died by his own hand between the first and second numbers, some difficulty was experienced in replacing him; and long afterward, at one of the Royal Academy dinners, Thackeray told how this incident happened to bring him and Dickens together for the first time: "I can remember when Mr. Dickens was a very young man, and had commenced delighting the world with some charming humorous works, in covers which were

colored light-green, and came out once a month, that this young man wanted an artist to illustrate his writings; and I recollect walking up to his chambers in Furnival's Inn, with two or three drawings in my hand, which, strange to say, he did not find suitable." For a single number (the third) Mr. Buss furnished plates; but before the fourth number appeared Mr. Hablot K. Browne ("Phiz") had prepared some designs which were so satisfactory that the connection was kept up, and his name is now imperishably associated with the masterpieces of Dickens's genius.

According to the agreement between Boz and his publishers, he was to receive fourteen pounds for each monthly number of "Pickwick" (an emolument which he describes in a letter of that time as "too tempting to resist!"); and for the first two numbers he received payment in advance, in order to enable him to get married. On the 2d of April, 1836, two days after the publication of the first installment of "Pickwick," he was married to Catherine, eldest daughter of Mr. George Hogarth, who has been mentioned as his fellow worker on the "Chronicle"; and the summer months of that year were passed in a lodging at Chalk, near Gravesend, in the neighborhood associated with all his life, from his childhood to his death.

Perhaps as curious a fact as any other connected with the "Posthumous Papers of the Pick-

wick Club" is, that for several months it was a signal failure. The first few numbers attracted much less attention than the "Sketches by Boz," issued in book-form shortly before; and the question is said to have been seriously discussed at one time by the publishers whether they ought not to discontinue the publication of the serial. "But, just while the matter was under their consideration, Sam Weller, who had been introduced in the previous number, began to attract great attention, and to call forth much admiration. The press was all but unanimous in praising 'Samivel' as an entirely original character, whom none but a great genius could have created; and all of a sudden, in consequence of 'Samivel's' popularity, the 'Pickwick Papers' rose to an unheard of popularity. The back numbers of the work were ordered to a large extent, and of course all idea of discontinuing it was abandoned."

For the first number the order to the binder was for four hundred copies only, but before the completion of the work the sale amounted to nearly forty thousand. Of other incidents connected with this great success, the same writer quoted above, Mr. James Grant, has given some entertaining reminiscences:

"The famed Pickwick cigar—the Penny Pickwick of our childhood—is too well known to need any comment. It was a brand originally made by a manufacturer in Leman Street, Minories, and sold in boxes and

papers decorated with Mr. Pickwick, hat off, bowing to you in the politest manner, and offering for your notice a long scroll, setting forth the excellence of the cigar. . . . Then there were 'Pickwick' hats, with narrow brims curved up at the sides, as in the figure of the immortal possessor of that name; 'Pickwick' canes, with tassels; and 'Pickwick' coats, with brass and horn buttons, and the cloth invariably dark green or dark plum."

Long before it was finished "Pickwick" was dramatized by Moncrieff for the Strand Theatre, where it was performed under the title of "Sam Weller; or the Pickwickians." The *dénoûment* of the drama was very different to that given in the book itself, the adapter causing Mrs. Bardell to be tried and found guilty of attempted bigamy, her husband being Alfred Jingle; while Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, the legal sharks, were sent to Newgate for conspiracy, and only released upon the payment of £300 or thereabouts, which Mr. Pickwick, on receiving, generously handed to Jingle to start afresh in the world—the curtain falling with a herald entering and announcing the accession of Queen Victoria, which occurred about this time!

Nor was this the only association which the popular author had with the stage at this period. Early in 1836 he terminated his connection with the reporters' gallery, and, this affording him more leisure, he wrote for Mr. Braham's St. James's

Theatre a farce, entitled "The Strange Gentleman," founded upon one of his Boz Sketches (the "Great Winglebury Duel"). Pritt Harley acted the Strange Gentleman, and it is said that on one occasion Boz himself took a part. The piece was brought out in September and ran until December, when it was withdrawn for an operatic burletta, the "Village Coquettes," by the same author, the music by John Hullah. This also met with considerable success; and for a long time afterward Braham used to sing at concerts "The Child and the Old Man sat alone," invariably getting encored most enthusiastically. Three other songs in the burletta were great favorites, namely, "Love is not a Feeling to pass away," "Autumn Leaves," and "There's a Charm in Spring."

It was about this time that Dickens first met his future friend and biographer, John Forster, who has thus vividly described the impression which the young author then made upon him:

"Very different was his face in those days from that which photography has made familiar to the present generation. A look of youthfulness first attracted you, and then a candor and openness of expression which made you sure of the qualities within. The features were very good. He had a capital forehead, a firm nose with full wide nostril eyes wonderfully beaming with intellect and running over with humor and cheerfulness, and a rather prominent mouth strongly marked

with sensibility. The head was altogether well formed and symmetrical, and the air and carriage of it were extremely spirited. The hair so scant and grizzled in later days was then of a rich brown and most luxuriant abundance, and the bearded face of his last two decades had hardly a vestige of hair or whisker; but there was that in the face as I first recollect it which no time could change, and which remained implanted on it unalterably to the last. This was the quickness, keenness, and practical power, the eager, restless, energetic outlook on each several feature, that seemed to tell so little of a student or writer of books, and so much of a man of action and business in the world. Light and motion flashed from every part of it. *It was as if made of steel*, was said of it, four or five years after the time to which I am referring, by a most original and delicate observer, the late Mrs. Carlyle. 'What a face is his to meet in a drawing-room!' wrote Leigh Hunt to me, the morning after I made them known to each other. 'It has the life and soul in it of fifty human beings.' In such sayings are expressed not alone the restless and resistless vivacity and force of which I have spoken, but that also which lay beneath them of steadiness and hard endurance."

Other personal incidents belonging to this critical period of Dickens's life were the birth of his first child, a son, on January 6, 1837, and the sudden death, in May, of his young sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth, who had been living at his house. To the latter he was devotedly attached, and her death caused him such intense grief that he was obliged to leave off all work, so that the publi-

cation of "Pickwick" was interrupted for two months. This, in turn, caused much idle talk; and even thus early Dickens began to pay the inevitable penalty of publicity in being made the subject of gossip, which so annoyed and irritated him that he publicly replied to it in the following "Address," inserted in Part XV. (for July) of "Pickwick":

"186 Strand, *June* 30, 1837.

"The author is desirous to take the opportunity afforded him by his resumption of this work to state once again what he thought had been stated sufficiently emphatically before—namely, that its publication was interrupted by a severe domestic affliction of no ordinary kind; that this was the sole cause of the non-appearance of the present number in the usual course; and that henceforth it will continue to be published with its accustomed regularity.

"However superfluous this second notice may appear to many, it is rendered necessary by various idle speculations and absurdities which have been industriously propagated during the past month, which have reached the author's ears from every quarter, and have pained him exceedingly. By one set of intimate acquaintances, especially well informed, he has been killed outright; by another, driven mad; by a third, imprisoned for debt; by a fourth, sent per steamer to the United States; by a fifth, rendered incapable of any mental exertion for evermore—by all, in short, represented as doing anything but seeking in a few weeks' retirement the restoration of that cheerfulness and peace of which a sad bereavement had temporarily deprived him."

IV.

EDITOR AND NOVELIST.

Before the appearance of the sixth number of "Pickwick," and while its fate was still problematical, Dickens signed an agreement (dated August 22, 1836) with Richard Bentley, the publisher, by the terms of which he was to undertake the editorship of a monthly magazine to be started the following January, to which he was to supply a serial story; and shortly afterward he entered into another agreement with the same publisher to write two other tales, the first at a specified early date.

The magazine, "Bentley's Miscellany," began in January, 1837, and in the February number appeared the first installment of "Oliver Twist; or, The Parish Boy's Progress," which Dickens was thereafter writing month by month simultaneously with the last half of "Pickwick," and "not even by a week," as Mr. Forster says, "in advance of the printer with either." The new story began very speedily to share the popularity of the earlier one, which was now in the full tide of success; and before it had progressed very far unmistakable symptoms showed that the author as well as "the trade" was beginning to be aware of his importance and value. By the midsummer of 1837 Dickens had become so restive under the va-

rious contracts with which he had allowed himself to be fettered, and so discouraged by the amount of work which they threatened to exact of him, that he refused to fulfill his agreement with Mr. Bentley, and suspended the publication of "Oliver" in the magazine.

Then began a series of disputes in which neither author nor publisher appeared to advantage. Dickens, on his part, exhibited a curious indifference for contracts which, however galling they may now have become, were entered into by him willingly and even eagerly; while Mr. Bentley displayed a most unworthy reluctance to recognize the vastly enhanced value of the rights which he had acquired under circumstances quite different from those which had now come to exist.

The explanation of the whole matter is that Dickens was beginning to fret under an uneasy sense that his labor was enriching others while yielding insufficient for himself; and the results of the enormous sale of "Pickwick" were not calculated to allay this feeling. Over and above the fourteen pounds per month originally agreed upon, Messrs. Chapman & Hall had paid Dickens various sums amounting in the aggregate to about £2,500. This can hardly be considered poor pay, in view of the amount which Dickens had been willing to write the book for; but, on the other hand, while Messrs. Chapman & Hall had estimated on a profit of a few hundred pounds, it

was generally understood at the time that they had cleared £20,000.

But it was not in regard to "Pickwick" that Dickens was most dissatisfied, and he always admitted that Messrs. Chapman & Hall had treated him handsomely. What fretted him was the consciousness that now, when he had become by far the most popular author of the day, and when his name attached to a story would insure it thousands of readers, his whole time for several years to come was pledged under contracts which had been entered upon when he was known only to the small circle of readers that had been secured by the "Boz" sketches, and with a publisher who had shown no disposition to abate anything of his technical rights.

By the aid of Mr. Forster, a compromise was arranged in September, 1837, by which the third novel was abandoned on certain conditions, and "Barnaby Rudge" (such was the title already selected for the second story) was undertaken to be completed by November, 1838. In pursuance of this compromise, "Oliver Twist" was resumed in the "Miscellany" and Dickens edited for Mr. Bentley a "Life of Grimaldi," the celebrated clown. All that Dickens did to this book was to write the preface, and alter and rearrange the autobiographical MS. which had been left in Mr. Bentley's possession ; yet it had a perfectly unexampled sale and yielded large profits. All of

which probably tended to confirm the respective parties in their previous positions ; Dickens in the idea that he was placed by the contract at an unendurable disadvantage, and Mr. Bentley in the idea that he had better hold on to a bargain which promised to be so remunerative.

At any rate, Dickens's dissatisfaction soon manifested itself again, and another series of disputes led to another compromise by which "Barnaby Rudge" was to be begun in the "Miscellany" immediately after the completion of "Oliver Twist," in March, 1839. Even this did not end the matter, and, after further wrangling which nearly resulted in a law-suit, it was finally arranged that Dickens, having already, early in 1839, been relieved of the editorship of the magazine, should also be released from the agreement to write "Barnaby Rudge" on payment to Mr. Bentley of £2,250 for the copyright of "Oliver Twist" and such printed stock as remained on hand. Two large editions of "Oliver Twist" had been sold in the mean time, the first having been published in October, 1838, six months in advance of its completion in the magazine. It was issued in three octavo volumes, with twenty-four illustrations by George Cruikshank.*

* We have not thought it necessary to notice the claim made in behalf of Cruikshank (after Dickens's death) that he originated the main features of the story of "Oliver Twist." It seems to us that Mr. Forster did not characterize it too harshly when he described it as a "silly story."

This ungenial phase of Dickens's experience will be complete when we add that, at the very time when he was disputing over the Bentley agreements, he had a similar controversy in regard to the "Sketches," which ended in precisely the same way. Inspired by the then enormous popularity of Pickwick, Mr. Macrone, the owner of the "Sketches" determined to issue them in monthly parts of nearly the same size and in just the same form as the "Pickwick Papers." Dickens, feeling that to have his name before the town attached to three publications at the same time must be seriously prejudicial to his reputation, determined to prevent it if he could. Persuasion and threats alike failed to shake the purpose of Mr. Macrone, but he was willing to sell; and the result of the negotiations was that he received £2,000 for what had cost him only £300, and on which he had already made very considerable profits. Dickens joined his publishers in making the purchase, and the "Sketches," with additions, were subsequently issued in monthly parts by Messrs. Chapman & Hall, in the familiar green covers.

The last number of Pickwick was published in November, 1837 (parts 19 and 20 being issued together); and its completion was celebrated by a dinner, with Dickens in the chair and Sergeant Talfourd in the vice-chair, "everybody in hearty good humor with every other body." Hardly

had this happy conclusion been reached, and while the disputes with Bentley were still pending, when Dickens signed an agreement with Chapman & Hall (dated November 19, 1837), whereby he engaged to "write a new work, the title whereof shall be determined by him, of a similar character and of the same extent as Pickwick," the first number of which was to be delivered on the 15th of the following March, and each of the succeeding numbers on the same day of each of the succeeding nineteen months. On the delivery of each number he was to be paid the sum of £150 (or £3,000 in all) for five years' use of the copyright, the entire ownership in which was then to revert to Dickens. As a further inducement to this new story, the publishers executed a "deed," conveying to Dickens a third ownership in the "Pickwick Papers," though five years were to elapse before the right should accrue.

The new story thus arranged for was "The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby"; the first number of which was published (before the completion of "Oliver Twist") in April, 1838, and the successive numbers thereafter monthly until October, 1839 (parts 19 and 20 being issued together in the same wrapper). While it is running its regular course, we may turn aside for a moment from the beaten highway of authorship in order to obtain a glimpse of the domestic and social life of Dickens at this period.

For about a year after his marriage he retained his lodgings at Furnival's Inn, but in March, 1837, he removed to No. 48, Doughty Street, which was his home until toward the end of 1839, when he again removed to a handsome residence, No. 1, Devonshire Terrace, Regent's Park. In 1839 he hired for his parents a pretty little cottage at Alphington, near Exeter, whither for many years afterward he was fond of retiring when particularly pressed by work. His eldest daughter, Mary, was born on the 6th of March, 1838; and a second daughter, Kate, was born in October, 1839.

These, aside from his work as author, were the principal incidents of his life at this period. Of his personal habits, Mr. Forster gives the following entertaining account:

"Dickens was very fond of riding in these early years, and there was no recreation he so much indulged, or with such profit to himself, in the intervals of his hardest work. I was his companion oftener than I could well afford the time for, the distances being great and nothing else to be done for the day; but when a note would unexpectedly arrive while I knew him to be hunted hard by one of his printers, telling me he had been sticking to work so closely that he must have rest, and, by way of getting it, proposing we should start together that morning at eleven o'clock for 'a fifteen-mile ride out, ditto in, and a lunch on the road' with a wind-up of six o'clock dinner in Doughty Street, I could not resist the good fellowship. His notion of finding rest

from mental exertion in as much bodily exertion of equal severity continued with him to the last; taking in the later years what I had always thought the too great strain of as many miles in walking as he now took in the saddle, and too often indulging it at night; for, though he was always passionately fond of walking, he observed as yet a moderation in it, even accepting as sufficient my seven or eight miles' companionship. 'What a brilliant morning for a country walk!' he would write, with not another word in his dispatch. Or, 'Is it possible that you can't, oughtn't, shouldn't, mustn't, *won't* be tempted, this gorgeous day?' Or, 'I start precisely—precisely, mind—at half-past one. Come, come, *come*, and walk in the green lanes. You will work the better for it all the week. COME! I shall expect you.' Or, 'You don't feel disposed, do you, to muffle yourself up and start off with me for a good brisk walk over Hampstead Heath? I knows a good 'ous there where we can have a red-hot chop for dinner, and a glass of good wine': which led to our first experience of Jack Straw's Castle, memorable for many happy meetings in coming years. But the rides were most popular and frequent. 'I think,' he would write, 'Richmond and Twickenham, thro' the park, out at Knightsbridge, and over Barnes Common, would make a beautiful ride.' Or, 'Do you know, I shouldn't object to an early chop at some village inn'? Or, 'Not knowing whether my head was off or on, it became so addled with work, I have gone riding the old road, and should be truly delighted to meet or be overtaken by you.' Or, 'Where shall it be—*oh*, *where*—Hampstead, Greenwich, Windsor? WHERE? ? ? ? ? ? while the day is bright, not when it has dwindled away to nothing! For who can be of any use whatsomdever

such a day as this, excepting out of doors?' Or, it might be interrogatory summons to 'A hard trot of three hours?' or intimation as laconic 'To be heard of at Eel-pie House, Twickenham!' When first I knew him, I may add, his carriage for his wife's use was a small chaise with a smaller pair of ponies, which, having a habit of making sudden rushes up by-streets in the day and peremptory standstills in ditches by night, were changed in the following year for a more suitable equipage."

Deviating in this respect from the uniform practice of his later years, Dickens used at this period to write after dinner, and even to late hours of the night, especially as "Oliver Twist" drew toward its close. Writing to Mr. Forster in May, 1838, he says: "I worked pretty well last night, very well, indeed; but, although I did eleven close slips before half-past twelve, I have four to write to complete the chapter; and, as I foolishly left them till this morning, have the steam to get up afresh." A month later he writes: "I got to the sixteenth slip last night and shall try hard to get to the thirtieth before I go to bed." At the beginning of August: "Hard at work still. Nancy is no more. I showed what I have done to Kate (his wife) last night, who was in an unspeakable '*state*': from which and my own impression I augur well. When I have sent Sikes to the devil, I must have yours." A little later: "No, no, don't, don't let us ride till to-

morrow, not having yet disposed of the Jew, who is such an out-and-outer that I don't know what to make of him." And finally, in the first week of September: "Come and give me a call, and let us have 'a bit o' talk' before we have a bit o' som'at else. My missis is going out to dinner, and I ought to go, but I have got a bad cold. So do you come, and sit here, and read, or work, or do something, while I write the LAST chapter of "Oliver," which will be arter a lamb chop."

During the summer of 1837, he went abroad with his wife for a ten-days' holiday, visiting important places in Northern France and Holland. In the autumn he took lodgings at Broadstairs, thus making his first visit to that pleasant little watering-place, of which he became so fond; whither he removed for the autumn months with all his household for many years in succession; and of which he gave a charming sketch in a paper entitled "Our Watering-Place," and contributed to "Household Words."

In some "Reminiscences of Dickens," contributed immediately after his death to the "Englishwoman's Magazine," there is a remarkably graphic description of his personal appearance and characteristics at the period we have now reached; and, as the more salient characteristics remained with him throughout his life, we shall quote at some length from the paper:

"So vivid is my first impression of our great author, that I can see him now 'in my mind's eye' as clearly depicted as if days, and not years, had intervened since I was presented to him at the house of a relative of mine. I was first introduced to his wife in the sanctuary of the bedroom, where I was arranging my hair before the glass. I thought her a pretty little woman, with the heavy-lidded large blue eyes so much admired by men. The nose was a little *retroussé*, the forehead good, mouth small, round, and red-lipped, with a pleasant smiling expression, notwithstanding the sleepy look of the slow-moving eyes. The weakest part of the face was the chin, which melted too suddenly into the throat. She took kindly notice of me, and I went down with a fluttering heart to be introduced to 'Boz.'

"The *first* ideas that flashed through me were, 'What a fine characteristic face! What *marvelous* eyes! And what horrid taste in dress!'

"He wore his hair long, in 'admired disorder,' and it suited the picturesque style of his head; but he had on a surtout with a very wide collar, very much thrown back, showing a vast expanse of waistcoat, drab trousers, and drab boots with patent leather toes, and the whole effect (apart from his fine head) gave evidence of a *loud* taste in costume, and was not proper for evening dress.

"Of course, I listened eagerly during dinner to catch the pearls and other precious things that fell from his lips, and watched, in reverent admiration, every flash of his clear gray eyes, for I was enthusiastic, and in my teens. He did not speak much, and his utterance was low-toned and rapid, with a certain thickness, as if the tongue were too large for the mouth. I found afterward that this was a family characteristic; and he had a habit

of sucking his tongue when thinking, and at the same time running his fingers through his hair till it stood out in most leonine fashion. When writing, if his ideas got entangled, he would work away with his left hand, dragging viciously at certain locks until the subject became satisfactorily 'evolved out of his inner consciousness.'

"Before uttering an amusing speech I noticed a most humorous scintillation gleaming in his eyes, accompanied by a comic elevation of one eyebrow; but he did not strike me as possessing the sarcastic, searching expression that I expected. I discovered afterward that, without appearing to notice what was going on around, nothing escaped him; and at the times when his eyes had a far-off look, wide-opened and almost stony in their fixity, he was in reality making mental notes of his surroundings.

"How many times have I been betrayed into committing myself in thoughtless discourse, duped by his abstracted air! How often have I indulged in sundry foolish acts, and given utterance to much silly *persiflage* and ill-digested reasoning among our circle, in the full confidence of his being in the seventh heaven of rapt reverie, to find him suddenly rising up, shaking his mane like a lion from his slumbers, and, with a face radiant with mischief and fun, recapitulating all my girlish "slip-slop," twisting and turning it into the most unexpectedly distorted shapes, and tacking on to it a running commentary of witty criticisms.

"He never thought himself too great a genius to enter into our games, but he somehow always contrived to transfuse such a tone of cleverness and depth into them that they became 'keen encounters of our wits,' and we were all put on our mettle to play *up* to the subtile spirit

with which the master-mind impregnated the most sterile matter. . . .

"Sometimes we played vingt-et-un, and he was as playfully eager, as full of noisy glee, as the veriest schoolboy. One evening his friend Mr. M—— made his appearance in a preposterously long stock which he evidently thought was perfectly *chic*. Dickens eyed it for some time with a perplexed and thoughtful demeanor.

"'Hollo, Charley!' said Mr. M—— 'what are you staring at my stock for?'

"Dickens threw into his countenance an exaggerated expression of relief from a harassing doubt, and cried:

"'Stock? Oh! I'm glad to know it is meant for a stock; it was so painful to think you might have intended it for a waistcoat.'

"A great deal of amusement was excited by Mrs. Charles Dickens perpetrating the most absurd puns, which she did with a charming expression of innocence and deprecation of her husband's wrath; while he tore his hair and writhed as if convulsed with agony. He used to pretend to be utterly disgusted, although he could neither resist laughter at the puns nor at the pretty comic *moue* she made (with eyes turned up till little but the whites were visible) after launching forth one of these absurdities.

"Every autumn it was Mr. Dickens's custom to take his family to Broadstairs, and shortly after I became acquainted with him the usual flitting took place. He begged my friends Mr. and Mrs. S—— to take a house there also, and offered to look for one for them. . . .

"Shortly after this my friends took the house, and I accompanied them as a visitor, to my intense delight, for I hoped to be privileged to daily enjoyment of the pres-

ence of this man of genius. And now began a time which I look back to as almost the brightest in my life, as far as enjoyment went. Every day was spent by our family and the Dickenses together, either doing the usual seaside recreations, or at each other's houses. In the familiarity which such friendly association engenders we got up ridiculous relations to each other. He pretended to be engaged in a semi-sentimental, semi-jocular, and wholly nonsensical flirtation with me as well as with Milly T——, one of my friends, a charming woman of a certain age, and we on our side acted mutual jealousy toward each other; and Mrs. Charles Dickens entered into the fun with great gusto and good humor. My friend Milly he called his 'charmer,' 'the beloved of his soul,' and I was his 'fair enslaver' and his 'queen.' We generally addressed each other in the old English style of euphuism, and he would ask us to dance in such bombastic nonsense as—

"'Wilt tread a measure with me, sweet lady? Fain would I thread the mazes of this saraband with thee.'

"'Ay, fair sir, that I will right gladly; in good sooth I'll never say thee nay.'

"I need not say that the stately and courtly gravity with which we 'trod our measure' was truly edifying, and the spectators were convulsed at the wonderful Turveydrop deportment of Mr. Dickens, and the Malvolio-like conceit he contrived to call into his countenance.

"'I think I could act a pompous ass to perfection!' he exclaimed, after one of these dances. 'Let us get up some charades, and test our histrionic powers.'

"After some discussion we fixed on the word 'Pompadour,' and he took the part of Louis XIV. Milly was a Comtesse de Soubise, and I as Madame Pompadour

was supposed to be jealous of her with good cause. The first syllable represented the stiff etiquette and tiresome observances of the court of the Grand Monarque, and was acted entirely in pantomimic action. The second syllable (converted into *adore*) was a love-scene, in which Louis did a deal of inflated bombast in the ancient French style of love-making to the rival comtesse. The whole was completed by the wily mistress obtaining by stratagem a *lettre de cachet* from the king, and consigning the rival to the Bastile, while the triumph of Pompadour was complete. This was all acted on the spur of the moment, without any costume but such drapery and finery as could be obtained readily and twisted into use. Mr. Dickens was very grandiose, although he figured in a lady's broad-brimmed hat, pinned up on one side, and a rather draggled feather stuck nearly on end, which would keep turning round the wrong way.

"We rarely heard Dickens attempt punning, for which he professed profound contempt, but on one occasion he was accused of irreverence in making one. A game of whist was going on, and one of the ladies who was not playing (I think it was his mother, but am not positive) fell into a slight nap in the background. At the last trick of the game one of the party banged down the king of trumps in such loud glee as to awaken this lady, who started up with a scared look of bewilderment. Dickens turned round laughingly and said, 'Don't be alarmed, but you look awfully like one of the defunct on the day of judgment!' 'Why?' 'Because you were awakened by the sound of the *last trump!*' . . .

"Like all poetical natures, he delighted in gazing at the sea. He would remain for hours as if entranced; with a rapt, immovable, sphinx-like calm on his face,

and that far-off look in his magnificent eyes, totally forgetful of everything, and abstracted from us all. We always respected his isolation, and carefully kept aloof. . . .

"One night we were all assembled on the little pier or jetty which ran out into the sea, with an upright spar fixed at the extreme end. At the beginning was a railed-off space with seats, which he called the family pew. Mr. Dickens was in high spirits, and enjoyed the darkness of the evening, because he escaped the curious eyes of the Broadstairs population. We had a quadrille all to ourselves, the music being Frederick Dickens's whistling and Mr. Dickens's accompaniment on his pocket-comb. We then strolled farther down to watch by the fading light the tide come rippling in. The night grew darker, starless, and moonless; the only light being a lingering, lurid gleam, which touched the crest of the waves with a phosphorescent glimmer. Dickens seemed suddenly to be possessed with the demon of mischief; he threw his arm around me and ran me down the inclined plane to the end of the jetty till we reached the tall post. He put his other round this, and exclaimed in theatrical tones that he intended to hold me there till 'the sad sea waves' should submerge us.

"'Think of the sensation we shall create! Think of the road to celebrity which you are about to tread! No, not exactly to *tread*, but to flounder into!'

"Here I implored him to let me go, and struggled hard to release myself.

"'Let your mind dwell on the column in the "Times" wherein will be vividly described the pathetic fate of the lovely E. P., drowned by Dickens in a fit of dementia! Don't struggle, poor little bird; you are powerless in the claws of such a kite as this child!'

"By this time the gleam of light had faded out, and the water close to us looked uncomfortably black. The tide was coming up rapidly, and surged over my feet. I gave a loud shriek and tried to bring him back to common sense by reminding him that 'my dress, my best dress, my *only* silk dress, would be ruined.' Even this climax did not soften him; he still went on with his serio-comic nonsense, shaking with laughter all the time, and panting with his struggles to hold me.

"'Mrs. Dickens!' (a frantic shriek this time, for now the waves rushed up to my knees) 'help me! make Mr. Dickens let me go—the waves are up to my knees!'

"'Charles!' cried Mrs. Dickens, echoing my wild scream, 'how can you be so silly? You will both be carried off by the tide' (tragically, but immediately sinking from pathos to bathos), 'and you'll spoil the poor girl's silk dress!'

"'Dress!' cried Dickens, with withering scorn. 'Talk not to me of *dress!* When the pall of night is enshrouding us in Cimmerian darkness, when we already stand on the brink of the great mystery, shall our thoughts be of fleshly vanities? Am I not immolating a brand-new pair of patent leathers still unpaid for? Perish such low-born thoughts! In this hour of abandonment to the voice of destiny shall we be held back by the puerilities of silken raiment? Shall leather or prunella (whatever that may be) stop the bolt of Fate?' with a sudden parenthetical sinking from bombast to familiar accents, and back again.

"At this point I succeeded in wresting myself free, and scampered to my friends, almost crying with vexation, my *only* silk dress clinging clammily round me, and streaming with salt water. My chaperone, Mrs. S——,

received me with unjust severity, evidently thinking I could have got away if I had chosen.

"'Run home at once,' she said majestically, 'and take off your wet things. I am surprised at you!'

"During this wrestling match between us I can not describe the ridiculous effect produced by his 'mouthing' in the Ercles vein, with now and then a quick descent into comicality—the contrast between the stiltified language and the gasping struggles caused by my efforts to get free, his suppressed chuckles at my dismay, my wild appeals, and the expostulations of his wife and the rest, who stood by, like the chorus in a Greek play, powerless to help.

"I went off, escorted by Frederick Dickens, after hearing Mrs. Charles say:

"'It was too bad of you, Charles; remember poor E. can not afford to have her dress destroyed. Of course you'll give her another!'

"'Never!' was the reply. 'I have sacrificed her finery and my boots to the infernal gods. Kismet! It is finished! Eureka! etc., etc.; and now I go to tug myself black in the face getting off my pedal covers.'

"Dickens was rather reckless in his fun sometimes, and my wardrobe suffered wofully in consequence. There was a sort of promontory stretching out into the sea, where in rough weather the waves used to rush up several feet, and come splashing down like a shower-bath. On two occasions, when I had thoughtlessly ventured near this spot, he seized me and ran me, *nolens volens*, right under the cataract, to the irretrievable ruin of two bonnets of frail fabric, and my slender purse was taxed to the utmost to replace them.

"It was arranged that we should make an excursion

to Pegwell Bay and lunch at the small hotel on prawns and bottled porter; and on a lovely morning two open carriages stood at our door ready to receive us. Mrs. Dickens and two of her lady visitors had walked to our house, and we were only waiting for Mr. Dickens and some gentlemen friends. Presently he came in in high glee, flourishing a yard of ballads, which he had just bought from a beggar in the street.

"'Look here! fair dames and damosels!' he cried exultingly. 'All for one penny, invested by yours truly for the delectation of the company. One song alone is worth a Jew's eye—quite new and original—the subject being the interesting announcement about our gracious Queen. It is in the vulgar tongue, but you are all so familiar with "Nix my Dolly," and other songs of that kind, that I dare say you will not be shocked.'

"He commenced to give us a specimen, but after hearing one verse there arose a cry of universal execration. The song was founded on the official notice that a prince or princess might shortly be expected, and was sung to the tune of 'The King of the Cannibal Islands.' He pretended to be vexed at us 'shutting him up,' said there 'was nothing wrong in it; he had written a great deal worse himself,' and when we were going to enter the carriages, he said:

"'Now, look here, I give due notice to all and sundry, that I mean to sing that song and a good many of the others during the ride, so those ladies who think them vulgar can go in the other carriage. I am not going to invest my hard-earned penny for nothing.'

"I was quite certain that Charles Dickens was the last man in the world to shock the modesty of any female, and too much of a gentleman to do anything that was

annoying to us, but I thought it was as well to go in the other carriage, and so he had no ladies with him but his wife and Mrs. S——. I was not sorry on the whole to be where I was, as I heard for the next half hour small portions of those songs wafted on the breeze to us whenever our vehicle approached near them, and the bursts of laughter from ladies and gentlemen, and the mischievous twinkle in Dickens's eye, proved that he was in such a madcap mood that it was as well there were none but married people with him, the subject being what it was, of a 'Gampish' nature. . . .

"One night we all went to the Tivoli Gardens, a place in the style of Vauxhall on a small scale. There was a covered portion set apart for dancing, and we saw some very respectable people footing it with great enjoyment. We had a consultation whether it would be very *infra dig.* if the young ones of our party had a private quadrille among themselves, and, as no one knew us, we decided to enjoy ourselves too. Mr. Dickens, meanwhile, walked about, not venturing into the glare of the lights, as his face was too well known for him to preserve his *incognito.* There was a girl dancing near us, who had long plaited tails of hair down her back, sandaled shoes, and frilled drawers, to whom, by universal acclamation, we affixed the name of Morleena Kenwigs. Dickens was amused at the resemblance, and was making a laughing remark on her, when a man came close to him and stared knowingly and rather offensively in his face. Dickens moved away, but this bore followed him, glowering with all his eyes, and with ears on full cock to catch every stray word. At last Dickens lost patience, and, turning suddenly, confronted him with:

"'Pray, sir, are you a native of this place?'

"'N—no, sir,' stammered the individual.

"'Oh, I beg your pardon!' returned Dickens, with elaborate politeness. 'I fancied I could detect *broad-stares* on your very face.'

"I need not say that the unhappy wight vanished into the shades of evening. . . .

"There were times when we gave Mr. Dickens 'a wide berth,' and Milly and I have often run round corners to get out of his way, when we thought he was in one of these moods, which we could tell by one glance at his face. His eyes were always like 'danger lamps,' and warned people to clear the line for fear of collision. We felt we had to do with a genius, and, in the throes and agonies of bringing forth his conceptions, we did not expect him to submit to be interrupted by triflers like ourselves; at these times I confess I was horribly afraid of him. I told him so, to his great amusement.

"'Why, there's nothing formidable about *me!*'

"'Isn't there?' I answered. 'You look like a forest lion with a shaggy mane at these seasons; and I always think of the words—

> "'He roared so loud, and looked so wondrous grim,
> His very shadow dared not follow him.'

"He laughed aloud, and said: 'What! do you play shadow to my lion? Nay, then, as Bottom the weaver says, "I must aggravate my voice, I will roar you as gently as any suckling dove."' After this I did not feel quite so frightened of him, though I got out of his way all the same."

All this time "Nicholas Nickleby" was moving forward with a success and popularity which exceeded even that of "Pickwick," the first num-

ber starting off with a sale that reached nearly fifty thousand. On its completion in October, 1839, it was dedicated to "W. C. Macready, Esq.," and the event was celebrated by a dinner, at which Talfourd, Macready, Maclise, Wilkie, Mr. Thomas Beard, and Mr. Forster were present. The success of the story had so far surpassed even the most sanguine anticipations that, in recognition of it, the publishers added fifteen hundred pounds to the amounts previously agreed upon—making four thousand five hundred pounds paid for the use of the copyright during five years.

As a bit of hack-work belonging to this period we may mention a volume of "Sketches of Young Gentlemen," written for Messrs. Chapman & Hall as a companion volume to "Sketches of Young Ladies," issued by the same publishers, but not written by Dickens. This was published in 1838, and was followed in 1840 by "Sketches of Young Couples; with an urgent Remonstrance to the Gentlemen of England, being Bachelors or Widowers, at the present Alarming Crisis. By the Author of 'Sketches of Young Gentlemen.'" Neither of these pieces was ever included among his acknowledged writings. He also wrote a farce for Macready's Covent Garden enterprise; but the actors could not agree about it, so he turned it into a story called "The Lamplighter," and contributed it to a volume entitled "The Pic-Nic Papers, by Various Hands; edited by Charles

Dickens," which was published in 1841 for the benefit of Mrs. Macrone, widow of the first publisher of the "Boz Sketches."

V.

"MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK."

For some months before the completion of "Nickleby" the question of its successor was continually presenting itself, and had been anxiously discussed by Dickens and his advisers. Dickens himself was of the opinion that it would be unwise to persist in the old plan, fearing that the public might tire of the same twenty numbers over again. "There was also," says Mr. Forster, "another and more sufficient reason for change which naturally had great weight with him, and this was the hope that, by invention of a new mode as well as kind of serial publication, he might be able for a time to discontinue the writing of a long story, with all its strain on his fancy; in any case to shorten and vary the length of the stories written by himself, and perhaps ultimately to retain all the profits of a continuous publication without necessarily himself contributing every line that was to be written for it."

As early as July, 1839, he had broached the

idea of such a periodical to Mr. Forster, and, the latter having advised with Messrs. Chapman & Hall, Dickens was invited to state in writing the nature of the project which he had in view. In response to this invitation he wrote that the publication he contemplated should consist entirely of original matter, should be published weekly at the price of threepence, and at regular intervals should have its weekly numbers gathered into volumes.

"The best general idea of the plan of the work," he continued, "might be given, perhaps, by reference to the 'Spectator,' the 'Tatler,' and Goldsmith's 'Bee'; but it would be far more popular both in the subjects of which it treats and its mode of treating them. I would propose to start, as the 'Spectator' does, with some pleasant fiction relative to the origin of the publication; to introduce a little club or knot of characters and to carry their personal histories and proceedings through the work; to introduce fresh characters constantly; to reintroduce Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, the latter of whom might furnish an occasional communication with great effect; to write amusing essays on the various foibles of the day as they arise; to take advantage of all passing events; and to vary the form of the papers by throwing them into sketches, essays, tales, adventures, letters from imaginary correspondents, and so forth, so as to diversify the contents as much as possible. . . .

"In order to give fresh novelty and interest to this undertaking, I should be ready to contract to go at any specified time (say in the midsummer or autumn of the

year, when a sufficient quantity of matter in advance should have been prepared, or earlier if it were thought fit) either to Ireland or to America, and to write from thence a series of papers descriptive of the places and people I see, introducing local tales, traditions, and legends, something after the plan of Washington Irving's 'Alhambra.' I should wish the republication of these papers in a separate form, with others to render the subject complete (if we should deem it advisable), to form part of the arrangement for the work; and I should wish the same provision to be made for the republication of the Gog and Magog series, or indeed any that I undertook."

The scheme was regarded favorably by Messrs. Chapman & Hall, and early in 1840 an agreement was signed by which the publishers were to assume all risk of every kind; and were to pay, as part of the expenses of each weekly number, the sum of fifty pounds to Dickens, who, in addition, was to receive half the realized profits of the publication.

Six weeks before the signature of this agreement, while a title for the work was still undetermined, Dickens wrote Mr. Forster as follows:

"I will dine with you. I intended to spend the evening in strict meditation (as I did last night); but perhaps I had better go out, lest all work and no play should make me a dull boy. *I* have a list of titles too, but the final title I have determined on—or something very near it. I have a notion of this old file in the queer house opening the book by an account of himself, and, among

other peculiarities, of his affection for an old quaint queer-cased clock; showing how that, when they have sat alone together in the long evenings, he has got accustomed to its voice, and come to consider it as the voice of a friend; how its striking, in the night, has seemed like an assurance to him that it was still a cheerful watcher at his chamber-door; and how its very face has seemed to have something of welcome in its dusty features, and to relax from its grimness when he has looked at it from his chimney-corner. Then I mean to tell how that he has kept odd manuscripts in the old, deep, dark, silent closet where the weights are; and taken them from thence to read (mixing up his enjoyments with some notion of his clock); and how, when the club came to be formed, they, by reason of their punctuality and his regard for this dumb servant, took their name from it. And thus I shall call the book either "Old Humphrey's Clock," or "Master Humphrey's Clock"; beginning with a woodcut of old Humphrey and his clock, and explaining the why and wherefore. All Humphrey's own papers will be dated then from my clock-side, and I have divers thoughts about the best means of introducing the others. I thought about this all day yesterday and all last night till I went to bed. I am sure I can make a good thing of this opening, which I have thoroughly warmed up to in consequence."

The plan and title being thus settled, the project was rapidly carried into execution, and the first number of "Master Humphrey's Clock" bore date April 4, 1840. The sale of this first number was unexpectedly large, amounting to nearly seventy thousand copies; but, as soon as the discov-

ery was made that it contained no continued story, the demand fell off to such an extent as to convince all concerned that some new element of interest must be introduced in order to save the enterprise from complete failure.

Fortunately the material was ready to hand. While on a visit to Landor, at Bath, a short time previously, Dickens had conceived the idea of Little Nell and "The Old Curiosity Shop." The first intention had been to make out of it a tale of a few chapters only, to run through a number or two of "Master Humphrey"; but he had hardly begun to write when the opportunity which the subject afforded for more extended treatment so impressed him that he resolved to throw everything else aside and surrender himself to his fancy.

Of the change of plan which thus resulted he has himself given an account in the preface to the story which he prepared for the collected edition of his works: "The first chapter of this tale appeared in the fourth number of 'Master Humphrey's Clock,' when I had already been made uneasy by the desultory character of that work, and when, I believe, my readers had strongly participated in the feeling. The commencement of a story was a great satisfaction to me, and I had reason to believe that my readers participated in this feeling too. Hence, being pledged to some interruptions and some pursuit of the original design, I set cheerfully about disentan-

gling myself from those impediments as fast as I could; and, this done, from that time until its completion 'The Old Curiosity Shop' was written and published from week to week, in weekly parts."

The difficulties of this mode of publication—in which, in spite of its limited space, each installment had to contribute its individual effect—greatly hampered the author; but, with the exception of "David Copperfield," there is none of his stories that took such a hold upon him in the writing. Dick Swiveller was a prime favorite with him among all the creations of his fancy; and the pathos of Little Nell's end affected him quite as profoundly as it has ever affected any of his readers. Here is a letter to Mr. George Cattermole, the artist, giving instructions for two illustrations which the latter was to make for the story:

December 22, 1840.

"Dear George: The child lying dead in the little sleeping-room, which is behind the open screen. It is winter time, so there are no flowers; but upon her breast and pillow, and about her bed, there may be strips of holly and berries, and such free green things. Window overgrown with ivy. The little boy who had that talk with her about angels may be by the bedside, if you like it so; but I think it would be quieter and more peaceful if she is quite alone. I want it to express the most beautiful repose and tranquillity, and to have something of a happy look, if death can.

"The child has been buried inside the church, and the old man, who can not be made to understand that she is dead, repairs to the grave and sits there all day long, waiting for her arrival, to begin another journey. His staff and knapsack, her little bonnet and basket, etc., lie beside him. 'She'll come to-morrow,' he says when it gets dark, and goes sorrowfully home. I think an hour-glass running out would help the notion; perhaps her little things upon his knee, or in his hand.

"I am breaking my heart over this story, and can not bear to finish it."

"Love to Missis."

"Ever and always heartily."

In a letter to Mr. Forster, written about the same time, he says: "You can't imagine (gravely I write and speak) how exhausted I am to-day with yesterday's labors. I went to bed last night utterly dispirited and done up. All night I have been pursued by the child; and this morning I am unrefreshed and miserable. I don't know what to do with myself. . . . I think the close of the story will be great." As the close approached, he writes (January 7, 1841): "I think it will come famously—but I am the wretchedest of the wretched. It casts the most horrible shadow upon me, and it is as much as I can do to keep moving at all. I tremble to approach the place a great deal more than Kit; a great deal more than Mr. Garland; a great deal more than the Single Gentleman. I sha'n't recover it for a long time. Nobody will miss her like I shall. It is

such a very painful thing to me, that I really can not express my sorrow. Old wounds bleed afresh when I only think of the way of doing it: what the actual doing it will be, God knows. I can't preach to myself the schoolmaster's consolation, though I try." Finally, on January 17th, he writes: "After you left last night, I took my desk up stairs, and, writing until four o'clock this morning, finished the old story. It makes me very melancholy to think that all these people are lost to me for ever, and I feel as if I never could become attached to any new set of characters."

The last installment of the story appeared in the number of the "Clock" for February 7, 1841, and shortly afterward the entire story was published in book form. In this form it had an extraordinary success, especially in America, and it probably contributed more than any other of his writings to that sort of personal affection with which the readers of Dickens's books learned to regard their author.

Immediately upon the completion of "The Old Curiosity Shop" in the pages of the "Clock," "Barnaby Rudge," which had been planned long before as one of the novels to be written under the Bentley agreements, was begun. This was Dickens's first attempt at what is called the historical novel, and it must be confessed that it contained slight promise of the conspicuous success which he afterward achieved in this field with

"The Tale of Two Cities." Though constructed with much care, and exceptionally well written, it seems to lack both reality and interest; and, though the management of the Raven is a masterpiece of humorous fancy, "Barnaby Rudge" has afforded fewer than any other of Dickens's novels of those types of character, and racy sayings, which fasten themselves upon the memory of the reader.*

The first volume of "Master Humphrey's Clock" was dedicated to Samuel Rogers, and the preface was dated "Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, September, 1840." The preface to the second volume was dated "Devonshire Terrace, London, March, 1841"; and the preface to the third volume was dated "Devonshire Terrace, November, 1841." This third volume was also the last; for Dickens, having found it impracticable to enlist such help as he required, and equally impracticable to carry the whole burden himself, resolved to abandon the enterprise. The

* The right to "Barnaby Rudge" was surrendered by Mr. Bentley, as has already been related (see page 69) on the payment by Dickens of £2,250 for the copyright and remaining stock of "Oliver Twist." This amount was advanced by Messrs. Chapman & Hall on the agreement that it should be deducted from the sum (£3,000) which they were to pay for the use of the copyright of "Barnaby Rudge" during six months after the publication of the last number. By subsequent mutual agreement the story appeared in the "Clock," the profits of which had repaid the loan.

intention to "wind up" the "Clock" was intimated on the wrapper of No. 80, for October 9, 1841. In an address to the reader, it was explained that by the form of a weekly publication the author had often felt himself cramped and confined in a very irksome and harassing degree by the space in which he had been constrained to move, and had at last arrived at the conclusion that it would be better to abandon this scheme of publication in favor of the old and well-tried plan, which had only twelve gaps in the year instead of fifty-two. He also intimated his purpose of, in the January following, paying a visit to America; and further stated it to be his intention to commence "on the 1st of November, 1842, a new book in monthly parts with the old green cover, in the old size and form, and at the old price." In a "Postscript" to this address on the wrapper of No. 87 (November 7, 1841), the author bade farewell to his correspondents and readers, "with a regret like that we feel in taking leave of friends who have become endeared to us by long and close connection; and I look forward with trustfulness and pleasure" he added, "to our next meeting."

The unsold stock of the "Clock" was, soon after publication, divested of the introductory chapters, miscellaneous papers, etc., and "The Old Curiosity Shop" and "Barnaby Rudge" were issued as independent works. In reference

to this, the author, in his preface to the cheap edition of "The Old Curiosity Shop," published in 1848, says:

"When the story was finished, that it might be freed from the incumbrance of associations and interruptions with which it had no kind of concern, I caused the few sheets of 'Master Humphrey's Clock' which had been printed in connection with it to be canceled; and, like the unfinished tale of the windy night and the notary in the 'Sentimental Journey,' they became the property of the trunk-maker and the butterman. Though I now affect to make the confession philosophically, as referring to a bygone emotion, I am conscious that my pen winces a little even while I write these words. But it was done, and wisely done; and 'Master Humphrey's Clock,' as originally constructed, became one of the lost books of the earth—which, we all know, are far more precious than any that can be read for love or money." *

Of the more personal incidents of this period it may be mentioned that his fourth child and second son, Walter Landor Dickens, was born on the 8th of February, 1841. During the spring of 1840 the ailments which troubled his early childhood, as we have seen, again made themselves felt, and increased horse-exercise was recommended to him by his physician. "We were now in consequence," says Mr. Forster, "when he was not at

* Not irretrievably lost, however. The introductory, intercalary, and concluding chapters of the "Clock" were reproduced as the "Other Stories," forming with "Edwin Drood" a volume in all the late editions of Dickens's Works.

the seaside, much on horseback in suburban lanes and roads; and the spacious garden of his new house was also turned to healthful use at even his busiest times of work." It may be remarked here that in all forms of athletic exercises, such as bar-leaping, bowling, quoits, etc., Dickens held his own even with such accomplished athletes as Maclise and Mr. Beard; while in sustained energy, what is called keeping it up, he distanced every competitor. He was extremely fond of all out-door games, and was a renowned performer at battledoor and bagatelle.

Perhaps the most striking incident of this period was his visit to Scotland in the summer of 1841, when a great public dinner was given in his honor at Edinburgh, with Wilson (Christopher North) in the chair and the *élite* of the city in attendance, and when he was formally presented with the city-freedom. Before returning to the south, he made a tour of the Highlands, visiting the Trosachs and Loch Katrine, Loch Leven, the terrible Pass of Glencoe, Inverary, Melrose, and Abbotsford.

During no portion of his life was Dickens fond of what is commonly called "society," but no one ever enjoyed more heartily and thoroughly that easy and informal intercourse which obtains between friends; and of those who at this time had come to be numbered among his friends may be mentioned Thackeray, Bulwer, Lord Jef-

frey, Lord Houghton, Sydney Smith, Rogers, Macready, Talfourd, Procter, Douglas Jerrold, Charles Knight, Count d'Orsay, Harness, Fonblanque, Maclise, Edwin Landseer, Stanfield, Wilkie, Frank Stone, and Miss Burdett Coutts.

VI.

FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA.

It has already been shown that when the idea of "Master Humphrey's Clock" was first shaping itself in Dickens's mind, a visit on his part to America formed part of his plan, and that by the time the periodical reached its close in November, 1841, he was able to announce the date of the proposed visit. Some letters which he interchanged with Washington Irving confirmed his resolution, if he had thought of wavering, and in little more than a month after the "wind-up" of the *Clock* all his arrangements had been made, including an agreement for the publication of a book which should record his impressions of America. It was arranged that his wife should accompany him, and the house in Devonshire Terrace being let for their term of absence, the four children were left in a furnished house in Osnaburgh Street, under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Macready.

They sailed from Liverpool in the steamship

Britannia, on the 4th of January, 1842, and, after a very rough and dangerous passage, landed at Boston on the 21st. The dangers and discomforts of the voyage are referred to in a letter dated Boston, January 31, 1842, and written to Mr. Thomas Mitton:

"We had a dreadful passage, the worst, the officers all concur in saying, that they have ever known. We were eighteen days coming; experienced a dreadful storm which swept away our paddle-boxes and stove our lifeboats; and ran aground besides, near Halifax, among rocks and breakers, where we lay at anchor all night. After we left the English Channel we had only one fine day. And we had the additional discomfort of being eighty-six passengers. I was ill five days, Kate six; though, indeed, she had a swelled face and suffered the utmost terror all the way.

"I can give you no conception of my welcome here. There never was a king or emperor upon the earth so cheered and followed by crowds, and entertained in public at splendid balls and dinners, and waited on by public bodies and deputations of all kinds. I have had one from the Far West—a journey of two thousand miles! If I go out in a carriage, the crowd surround it and escort me home; if I go to the theatre, the whole house (crowded to the door) rises as one man, and the timbers ring again. You can not imagine what it is. I have five great public dinners on hand at this moment, and invitations from every town and village and city in the States.

"There is a great deal afloat here in the way of subjects for description. I keep my eyes open pretty

wide, and hope to have done so to some purpose by the time I come home."

The results of keeping his eyes "open pretty wide" have been so fully described in his "American Notes," and are so widely known, that it would be useless to summarize them here; so we shall confine ourselves in the present chapter to matters with which the "Notes" could not very well deal—his first impressions of the country and people; the change which his opinions quickly underwent; and the causes of that bitterness of feeling which certain incidents of his visit aroused both in himself and among the people who had welcomed and entertained him with such extravagant demonstrations of esteem.

It will have been noticed in the foregoing letter that Dickens was both pleased and flattered by the extreme cordiality of the welcome extended to him, and his first letter to Mr. Forster (also written from Boston) gives more detailed expression to this feeling:

"How can I tell you," he writes, "what has happened since that first day? How can I give you the faintest notion of my reception here; of the crowds that pour in and out the whole day; of the people that line the streets when I go out; of the cheering when I went to the theatre; of the copies of verses, letters of congratulation, welcomes of all kinds, balls, dinners, assemblies without end? There is to be a public dinner to me here in Boston, next Tuesday, and great dissatisfac-

tion has been given to the many by the high price (£3 each) of the tickets. There is to be a ball next Monday week at New York, and 150 names appear on the list of the committee. There is to be a dinner in the same place, in the same week, to which I have had an invitation with every known name in America appended to it. But what can I tell you about any of these things which will give you the slightest notion of the enthusiastic greeting they give me, or the cry that runs through the whole country? I have had deputations from the Far West, who have come from more than two thousand miles' distance: from the lakes, the rivers, the backwoods, the log-houses, the cities, factories, villages, and towns. Authorities from nearly all the States have written to me. I have heard from the universities, Congress, Senate, and bodies public and private, of every sort and kind. 'It is no nonsense, and no common feeling,' wrote Dr. Channing to me yesterday. 'It is all heart. There never was, and never will be, such a triumph.' And it is a good thing, is it not, . . . to find those fancies it has given me and you the greatest satisfaction to think of, at the core of it all? It makes my heart quieter, and me a more retiring, sober, tranquil man, to watch the effect of those thoughts in all this noise and hurry, even than if I sat, pen in hand, to put them down for the first time. I feel, in the best aspects of this welcome, something of the presence and influence of that spirit which directs my life, and through a heavy sorrow has pointed upward with unchanging finger for more than four years past. And, if I know my heart, not twenty times this praise would move me to an act of folly. . . .

"'Well,' I can fancy you saying, 'but about his impressions of Boston and the Americans?'—Of the latter,

I will not say a word until I have seen more of them, and have gone into the interior. I will only say, now, that we have never yet been required to dine at a *table-d'hôte;* that, thus far, our rooms are as much our own here as they would be at the Clarendon; that but for an odd phrase now and then—such as *Snap of cold weather;* a *tongue-y man* for a talkative fellow; *Possible?* as a solitary interrogation; and *Yes?* for indeed—I should have marked, so far, no difference whatever between the parties here and those I have left behind. The women are very beautiful, but they soon fade; the general breeding is neither stiff nor forward; the good nature, universal. If you ask the way to a place—of some common water-side man, who don't know you from Adam—he turns and goes with you. Universal deference is paid to ladies, and they walk about at all seasons, wholly unprotected. . . .

"On looking back through these sheets, I am astonished to find how little I have told you, and how much I have even now in store which shall be yours by word of mouth. The American poor, the American factories, the institutions of all kinds—I have a book, already. There is no man in this town, or in this State of New England, who has not a blazing fire and a meat dinner every day of his life. A flaming sword in the air would not attract so much attention as a beggar in the streets. There are no charity uniforms, no wearisome repetition of the same dull ugly dress, in that blind school. All are attired after their own tastes, and every boy and girl has his or her individuality as distinct and unimpaired as you would find it in their own homes. At the theatres, all the ladies sit in the fronts of the boxes. The gallery are as quiet as the dress circle at dear Drury Lane. A

man with seven heads would be no sight at all, compared with one who couldn't read and write."

After the dinner above referred to had come off, he wrote :

"It was a most superb affair ; and the speaking *admirable.* Indeed, the general talent for public speaking here is one of the most striking of the things that force themselves upon an Englishman's notice. As every man looks on to being a member of Congress, every man prepares himself for it ; and the result is quite surprising. You will observe one odd custom—the drinking of sentiments. It is quite extinct with us, but here everybody is expected to be prepared with an epigram as a matter of course."

More playful in tone, but still not ill-natured on the whole, is the following reference to the Boz ball which formed part of the festivities prepared for him in New York :

"Now, the phase of character in the Americans which amuses me most was put before me in its most amusing shape by the circumstances attending this affair. I had noticed it before, and have since, but I can not better illustrate it than by reference to this theme. Of course I can do nothing but in some shape or other it gets into the newspapers. All manner of lies get there, and occasionally a truth so twisted and distorted that it has as much resemblance to the real fact as Quilp's leg to Taglioni's. But, with this ball to come off, the newspapers were if possible unusually loquacious ; and in their accounts of me, and my seeings, sayings, and doings

on the Saturday night and Sunday before, they describe my manner, mode of speaking, dressing, and so forth. In doing this, they report that I am a very charming fellow (of course), and have a very free and easy way with me; 'which,' say they, 'at first amused a few fashionables'; but soon pleased them exceedingly. Another paper, coming after the ball, dwells upon its splendor and brilliancy; hugs itself and its readers upon all that Dickens saw, and winds up by gravely expressing its conviction that Dickens was never in such society in England as he has seen in New York, and that its high and striking tone can not fail to make an indelible impression on his mind! For the same reason I am always represented, whenever I appear in public, as being 'very pale'; 'apparently thunderstruck'; and utterly confounded by all I see. . . . You recognize the queer vanity which is at the root of all this? I have plenty of stories in connection with it to amuse you with when I return."

These passages illustrate what we may call the earlier and more kindly impressions formed by Dickens. Of the change which came over them later, the most complete expression is to be found in his published "Notes"; but the most pungent summary of it is in the following letter to Mr. Macready, which appeared for the first time in the recently issued collection of "Letters."

"Baltimore, *March* 22, 1842.

". . . . My dear Macready, I desire to be so honest and just to those who have so enthusiastically and earnestly welcomed me, that I burned the last letter I wrote

to you—even to you to whom I would speak as to myself—rather than let it come with anything that might seem like an ill-considered word of disappointment. I preferred that you should think me neglectful (if you could imagine anything so wild) rather than I should do wrong in this respect. Still it is of no use. I *am* disappointed. This is not the republic I came to see; this is not the republic of my imagination. I infinitely prefer a liberal monarchy—even with its sickening accompaniments of court circles—to such a government as this. The more I think of its youth and strength, the poorer and more trifling in a thousand aspects it appears in my eyes. In everything of which it has made a boast—excepting its education of the people and its care for poor children—it sinks immeasurably below the level I had placed it upon; and England, even England, bad and faulty as the old land is, and miserable as millions of her people are, rises in the comparison.

"*You* live here, Macready, as I have sometimes heard you imagining! *You!* Loving you with all my heart and soul, and knowing what your disposition really is, I would not condemn you to a year's residence on this side of the Atlantic for any money. Freedom of opinion! Where is it? I see a press more mean, and paltry, and silly, and disgraceful than any country I ever knew. If that is its standard, here it is. But I speak of Bancroft, and am advised to be silent on that subject, for he is "a black sheep—a Democrat." I speak of Bryant, and am entreated to be more careful for the same reason. I speak of international copyright, and am implored not to ruin myself outright. I speak of Miss Martineau, and all parties—Slave-Upholders and Abolitionists, Whigs, Tyler Whigs, and Democrats—shower down upon me a

perfect cataract of abuse. 'But what has she done? Surely she praised America enough!' 'Yes; but she told us of some of our faults, and Americans can't bear to be told of their faults. Don't split on that rock, Mr. Dickens, don't write about America; we are so very suspicious.'

"Freedom of opinion! Macready, if I had been born here and had written my books in this country, producing them with no stamp of approval from any other land, it is my solemn belief that I should have lived and died poor, unnoticed, and a 'black sheep' to boot. I never was more convinced of anything than I am of that.

"The people are affectionate, generous, open-hearted, hospitable, enthusiastic, good-humored, polite to women, frank and candid to all strangers, anxious to oblige, far less prejudiced than they have been described to be, frequently polished and refined, very seldom rude or disagreeable. I have made a great many friends here, even in public conveyances, whom I have been truly sorry to part from. In the towns I have formed perfect attachments. I have seen none of that greediness and indecorousness on which travelers have laid so much emphasis. I have returned frankness with frankness; met questions not intended to be rude with answers meant to be satisfactory; and have not spoken to one man, woman, or child of any degree, who has not grown positively affectionate before we parted. In the respects of not being left alone, and of being horribly disgusted by tobacco-chewing and tobacco-spittle, I have suffered considerably. The sight of slavery in Virginia, the hatred of British feeling upon the subject, and the miserable hints of the impotent indignation of the South, have pained me very much; on the last head, of course, I have felt nothing

but a mingled pity and amusement; on the other, sheer distress. But, however much I like the ingredients of this great dish, I can not but come back to the point at which I started, and say that the dish itself goes against the grain with me, and that I don't like it.

"You know that I am truly a Liberal. I believe I have as little pride as most men, and I am conscious of not the smallest annoyance from being 'hail fellow well met' with everybody. I have not had greater pleasure in the company of any set of men among the thousands I have received (I hold a regular levee every day, you know, which is duly heralded and proclaimed in the newspapers) than in that of the carmen of Hartford, who presented themselves in a body in their blue frocks, among a crowd of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, and bade me welcome through their spokesman. They had all read my books, and all perfectly understood them. It is not these things I have in my mind when I say that the man who comes to this country a Radical and goes home again with his opinions unchanged must be a Radical on reason, sympathy, and reflection, and one who has so well considered the subject that he has no chance of wavering.

"We have been to Boston, Worcester, Hartford, New Haven, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Fredericksburg, Richmond, and back to Washington again. The premature heat of the weather (it was eighty yesterday in the shade) and Clay's advice—how you would like Clay!—have made us determine not to go to Charleston; but, having got to Richmond, I think I should have turned back under any circumstances. We remain at Baltimore for two days, of which this is one; then we go to Harrisburg. Then by the canal-boat and

the railroad over the Alleghany Mountains to Pittsburg, then down the Ohio to Cincinnati, then to Louisville, and then to St. Louis. I have been invited to a public entertainment in every town I have entered, and have refused them; but I have excepted St. Louis as the farthest point of my travels. My friends there have passed some resolutions which Forster has, and will show you. From St. Louis we cross to Chicago, traversing immense prairies. Thence by the Lakes and Detroit to Buffalo, and so to Niagara. A run into Canada follows, of course, and then—let me write the blessed words in capitals—we turn toward HOME. . . .

"I am ever, my dear Macready,
"Your Faithful Friend."

In view of this change of feeling (which was expressed even less guardedly in letters to Mr. Forster), the question will naturally be asked, What was its cause? and the answer must be, Chiefly the controversy which had arisen about international copyright.

Mr. Forster assures us that Dickens came to America "with no express intention of starting this question in any way, and certainly with no belief that such remark upon it as a person in his position could alone be expected to make would be resented strongly by any section of the American people." Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that the controversy took its origin in a number of pointed references to the matter in the speeches which Dickens made during the very

earliest stage of his visit, and that the extraordinary fierceness with which it raged was largely due to the passionate intensity of feeling with which he flung himself into it when once it was begun.

Of the state of mind into which he worked himself (or allowed himself to be worked) we can judge by a passage or two from his letters. Here is one from a letter to his brother-in-law, Mr. Henry Austin, dated May 1, 1842, and written at Niagara Falls :

"Is it not a horrible thing that scoundrel booksellers should grow rich here from publishing books, the authors of which do not reap one farthing from their issue by scores of thousands; and that every vile blackguard and detestable newspaper, so filthy and bestial that no honest man would admit one into his house for a scullery doormat, should be able to publish those same writings side by side, cheek by jowl, with the coarsest and most obscene companions with which they must become connected, in course of time, in people's minds? Is it tolerable that besides being robbed and rifled an author should be forced to appear in any form, in any vulgar dress, in any atrocious company; that he should have no choice of his audience, no control over his own distorted text, and that he should be compelled to jostle out of the course the best men in this country who only ask to live by writing? I vow before high Heaven that my blood so boils at these enormities that, when I speak about them, I seem to grow twenty feet high, and to swell out in proportion. 'Robbers that ye are,' I think to myself when I get upon my legs, 'here goes!' "

Again, writing to Mr. Forster just after the great dinner given him in New York, with Washington Irving in the chair, he said :

"I spoke, as you know, of international copyright at Boston; and I spoke of it again at Hartford. My friends were paralyzed with wonder at such audacious daring. The notion that I, a man alone by himself, in America, should venture to suggest to the Americans that there was one point on which they were neither just to their own countrymen nor to us, actually struck the boldest dumb! Washington Irving, Prescott, Hoffman, Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Washington Allston—every man who writes in this country is devoted to the question, and not one of them *dares* to raise his voice and complain of the atrocious state of the law. It is nothing that of all men living I am the greatest loser by it. It is nothing that I have a claim to speak and be heard. The wonder is that a breathing man can be found with temerity enough to suggest to the Americans the possibility of their having done wrong. I wish you could have seen the faces that I saw, down both sides of the table at Hartford, when I began to talk about Scott. I wish you could have heard how I gave it out. My blood so boiled as I thought of the monstrous injustice that I felt as if I were twelve feet high when I thrust it down their throats.

"I had no sooner made that second speech than such an outcry began (for the purpose of deterring me from doing the like in this city) as an Englishman can form no notion of. Anonymous letters; verbal dissuasions; newspaper attacks making Colt (a murderer who is attracting great attention here) an angel by comparison with me; assertions that I was no gentleman, but a mere mercenary scoundrel; coupled with the most monstrous

misrepresentations relative to my design and purpose in visiting the United States—came pouring in upon me every day. The dinner committee here (composed of the first gentlemen in America, remember that) were so dismayed that they besought me not to pursue the subject, *although they every one agreed with me.* I answered that I would. That nothing should deter me. . . . That the shame was theirs, not mine; and that, as I would not spare them when I got home, I would not be silenced here. Accordingly, when the night came, I asserted my right, with all the means I could command to give it dignity, in face, manner, or words; and I believe that, if you could have seen and heard me, you would have loved me better for it than ever you did in your life."

Nothing, in fact, did deter him. He prosecuted the quarrel to the bitter end; induced Mr. Forster to obtain a memorial and letters from leading English authors; and used all his influence to secure legislation on the subject in Congress. All the world knows that he failed; and there can be no doubt that his unseemly advocacy did much to postpone the success of the very cause which he had so passionately at heart.

It would have been well if Dickens's anger and indignation had found vent only in speeches designed to influence and enlighten public opinion; but his letters make it only too evident that he looked upon the book which he contemplated as affording him the opportunity to redress some of the grievances which he had suffered.

We have become, it is to be hoped, a much

less susceptible people, and there is something almost ludicrous now in the vociferous tumult of indignation which followed the publication (in October, 1842) of "American Notes for General Circulation." Still, it can not be denied that there was just ground for indignation, however unjustifiable may have been the forms of expression which it took. The satire of the book is malicious satire, and Dickens's letters make it only too evident that he himself regarded it as an essential part of the controversy that had been aroused; as does the introductory chapter, which was suspressed at the time by the advice of friends, but which was printed in the second volume of Mr. Forster's biography.*

* Dissatisfaction with the "Notes" was not confined to America. Macaulay was to have reviewed the book in the "Edinburgh Review"; but after reading it he abandoned the design, saying in a letter to Mr. Napier, the editor: "I can not praise it, and I will not cut it up. I can not praise it, though it contains a few lively dialogues and descriptions; for it seems to me to be, on the whole, a failure. It is written like the worst parts of "Humphrey's Clock." What is meant to be easy and sprightly is vulgar and flippant, as in the first two pages. What is meant to be fine is a great deal too fine for me, as the description of the Fall of Niagara. A reader who wants an amusing account of the United States had better go to Mrs. Trollope, coarse and malignant as she is. A reader who wants information about American politics, manners, and literature had better go even to so poor a creature as Buckingham. In short, I pronounce the book, in spite of some gleams of genius, at once frivolous and dull."

Nor did the controversy end even here. The American episode in "Martin Chuzzlewit" was avowedly introduced, partly to spur up the lagging sale, but chiefly in response to the challenge from this side to make good the aspersions in his "Notes."

As to the details of the visit, it need only be added that the itinerary sketched in the letter to Mr. Macready (previously quoted) was adhered to exactly, and that he made a *détour* into Canada, visiting Toronto, Kingston, Montreal, and Quebec. At Montreal some "private theatricals" were gotten up, with Dickens as stage-manager and principal actor. They combined into one evening's entertainment, "A Roland for an Oliver" (with Dickens as Alfred Highflyer); "Two o'Clock in the Morning" (with Dickens as Mr. Snobbington); and "Deaf as a Post" (with Dickens as Gallop, Mrs. Dickens as Amy Templeton).

Early in June he was back in New York ready for the return voyage, which was to be made in a sailing-vessel instead of in a steamer, as the outward voyage had been. The reasons given for this preference are both curious and amusing. Writing to Mr. Forster in the previous February he said:

"We mean to return home in a packet-ship—not a steamer. At that season of the year they are seldom more than three weeks making the voyage; and I never will trust myself upon the wide ocean, if it please Heav-

en, in a steamer again. When I tell you all that I observed on board that Britannia, I shall astonish you. Meanwhile, consider two of their dangers. First, that if the funnel were blown overboard the vessel must instantly be on fire, from stem to stern; to comprehend which consequence, you have only to understand that the funnel is more than forty feet high, and that at night you see the solid fire two or three feet above its top. Imagine this swept down by a strong wind, and picture to yourself the amount of flame on deck; and that a strong wind is likely to sweep it down you soon learn, from the precautions taken to keep it up in a storm, when it is the first thing thought of. Secondly, each of these boats consumes between London and Halifax 700 tons of coals; and it is pretty clear, from this enormous difference of weight in a ship of only 1,200 tons burden in all, that she must either be too heavy when she comes out of port, or too light when she goes in. The daily difference in her rolling, as she burns the coals out, is something absolutely fearful. Add to all this, that by day and night she is full of fire and people, that she has no boats, and that the struggling of that enormous machinery in a heavy sea seems as though it would rend her into fragments—and you may have a pretty considerable damned good sort of a feeble notion that it don't fit nohow; and that it ain't calculated to make you smart, overmuch; and that you don't feel 'special bright; and by no means first-rate; and not at all tonguey (or disposed for conversation); and that however rowdy you may be by natur', it does use you up com-plete, and that's a fact; and makes you quake considerable, and disposed toe damn the ēngīne!—All of which phrases, I beg to add, are pure Americanisms of the first water."

Early in July he was again in London, and was welcomed home by a dinner at Greenwich, in which Forster, Talfourd, Milnes, Procter, Maclise, Marryat, Stanfield, Barham, Hood, and Cruikshank took part.

VII.

AN INTERLUDE.

On his return from America, the house in Devonshire Terrace not being yet available, Dickens went with his family to Broadstairs for the usual autumn holiday, and employed himself there in the preparation of the "American Notes." The book appeared on the 18th of October, and before the close of the year four large editions had been sold, though it was much less popular than his stories had been.

To this period belongs a letter which, though it only refers to one of many similar incidents in his life, is too characteristic to be omitted. It was written to Professor Felton, one of the most highly esteemed of the many American friends whom he had made during his visit, and describes his going with Cruikshank to the funeral of Hone, of the "Every-day Book":

"We went into a little parlor where the funeral party was, and God knows it was miserable enough, for

the widow and children were crying bitterly in one corner, and the other mourners (mere people of ceremony, who cared no more for the dead man than the hearse did) were talking quite coolly and carelessly together in another; and the contrast was as painful and distressing as anything I ever saw. There was an independent clergyman present, with his bands on and a Bible under his arm, who, as soon as we were seated, addressed C. thus, in a loud, emphatic voice: 'Mr. C., have you seen a paragraph respecting our departed friend, which has gone the round of the morning papers?' 'Yes, sir,' says C., 'I have:' looking very hard at me the while, for he had told me with some pride coming down that it was his composition. 'Oh!' said the clergyman. 'Then you will agree with me, Mr. C., that it is not only an insult to me, who am the servant of the Almighty, but an insult to the Almighty, whose servant I am.' 'How is that, sir?' says C. 'It is stated, Mr. C., in that paragraph,' says the minister, 'that when Mr. Hone failed in business as a bookseller, he was persuaded by *me* to try the pulpit; which is false, incorrect, unchristian, in a manner blasphemous, and in all respects contemptible. Let us pray.' With which, and in the same breath, I give you my word, he knelt down, as we all did, and began a very miserable jumble of an extemporary prayer. I was really penetrated with sorrow for the family" (he exerted himself zealously for them afterward, as the kind-hearted C. also did), "but when C., upon his knees and sobbing for the loss of an old friend, whispered me that 'if that wasn't a clergyman, and it wasn't a funeral, he'd have punched his head,' I felt as if nothing but convulsions could possibly relieve me."

Immediately upon the completion of the "Notes," Dickens made an expedition to Cornwall, with Forster, Maclise, and Stanfield for his companions. Describing this trip in another letter to Professor Felton, he says :

"Blessed star of morning, such a trip as we had into Cornwall, just after Longfellow went away! We went down into Devonshire by the railroad, and there we hired an open carriage from the innkeeper, patriotic in all Pickwick matters, and went on with post-horses. Sometimes we traveled all night, sometimes all day, sometimes both. I kept the joint-stock purse, ordered all the dinners, paid all the turnpikes, conducted facetious conversations with the post-boys, and regulated the pace at which we traveled. Stanfield (an old sailor) consulted an enormous map on all disputed points of wayfaring; and referred, moreover, to a pocket-compass and other scientific instruments. The luggage was Forster's department; and Maclise, having nothing particular to do, sang songs. Heavens! If you could have seen the necks of bottles, distracting in their immense varieties of shape, peering out of the carriage pockets! If you could have witnessed the deep devotion of the post-boys, the wild attachment of the hostlers, the maniac glee of the waiters! If you could have followed us into the earthy old churches we visited, and into the strange caverns on the gloomy seashore, and down into the depths of mines, and up to the tops of giddy heights where the unspeakable green water was roaring, I don't know how many hundred feet below! If you could have seen but one gleam of the bright fires by which we sat in the big rooms of ancient inns at night, until long after the small

hours had come and gone, or smelt but one steam of the HOT punch (not white, dear Felton, like that amazing compound I sent you a taste of, but a rich, genial, glowing brown) which came in every evening in a huge broad china bowl! I never laughed in my life as I did on this journey. It would have done you good to hear me. I was choking and gasping and bursting the buckle off the back of my stock, all the way. And Stanfield got into such apoplectic entanglements that we were often obliged to beat him on the back with portmanteaus before we could recover him. Seriously, I do believe there never was such a trip. And they made such sketches, those two men, in the most romantic of our halting-places, that you would have sworn we had the Spirit of Beauty with us, as well as the Spirit of Fun."

Returned from this trip, Devonshire Terrace again became his home, and by the end of the year the first number of "The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit" was completed. But, before proceeding with the story of this work, we may get from the letters to Professor Felton and others some further glimpses of his more private occupations and amusements. In the same letter quoted from above (dated December 31, 1842) he says:

"The actuary of the national debt couldn't calculate the number of children who are coming here on Twelfth Night, in honor of Charley's birthday, for which occasion I have provided a magic lantern and divers other tremendous engines of that nature. But the best of it is that Forster and I have purchased between us the entire

stock in trade of a conjurer, the practice and display whereof is intrusted to me. An O my dear eyes, Felton, if you could see me conjuring the company's watches into impossible tea-caddies, and causing pieces of money to fly, and burning pocket-handkerchiefs without hurting 'em, and practicing in my own room, without anybody to admire, you would never forget it as long as you live. In those tricks which require a confederate, I am assisted (by reason of his imperturbable good-humor) by Stanfield, who always does his part exactly the wrong way, to the unspeakable delight of all beholders. We come out on a small scale, to-night, at Forster's, where we see the old year out and the new one in."

Another letter to Professor Felton, dated Broadstairs, 1st September, 1843, contains the following passage:

"This is a little fishing-place; intensely quiet; built on a cliff whereon—in the center of a tiny semicircular bay—our house stands; the sea rolling and dashing under the windows. . . . In a bay-window in a one pair, sits from nine o'clock to one a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. At one he disappears, presently emerges from a bathing-machine, and may be seen a kind of salmon-colored porpoise, splashing about in the ocean. After that he may be viewed in another bay-window on the ground-floor, eating a strong lunch; and after that, walking a dozen miles or so, or lying on his back in the sand reading a book. Nobody bothers him unless they know he is disposed to be talked to; and I am told he is very comfortable indeed. He's as brown as a berry, and they *do* say is a small fortune

to the innkeeper who sells beer and cold punch. But this is mere rumor. Sometimes he goes up to London (eighty miles or so away), and then I'm told there is a sound in Lincoln's-inn-fields at night, as of men laughing, together with a clinking of knives and forks and wine-glasses."

The month following the date of this letter, Dickens was at Manchester, presiding at the opening of its Athenæum, when Mr. Cobden and Mr. Disraeli also "assisted." He spoke mainly, says Mr. Forster, on a matter always very near his heart, the education of the very poor. "He protested against the danger of calling a little learning dangerous; declared his preference for the very least of the little over none at all; . . . told his listeners of the real and paramount danger he had lately taken Longfellow to see in the nightly refuges of London, 'thousands of immortal creatures condemned without alternative or choice to tread, not what our great poet calls the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire, but one of jagged flints and stones laid down by brutal ignorance'; and contrasted this with the unspeakable consolation and blessings that a little knowledge had shed on men of the lowest estate and most hopeless means, 'watching the stars with Ferguson the shepherd's boy, walking the streets with Crabbe, a poor barber here in Lancashire, with Arkwright, a tallow-chandler's son with Franklin, shoemaking with Bloomfield in his garret, following the

plow with Burns, and, high above the noise of loom and hammer, whispering courage in the ears of workers I could this day name in Sheffield and in Manchester.' "

A few months later he was again in the chair at the opening of the Mechanics' Institution at Liverpool, and again spoke on the subject of popular education. The following whimsical report of the proceedings on this occasion was addressed to his wife :

OUT OF THE COMMON—PLEASE.

DICKENS *against* THE WORLD.

CHARLES DICKENS, of No. 1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park, in the county of Middlesex, gentleman, the successful plaintiff in the above cause, maketh oath and saith : That on the day and date hereof, to wit at seven o'clock in the evening, he, this deponent, took the chair at a large assembly of the Mechanics' Institution at Liverpool, and that having been received with tremendous and enthusiastic plaudits, he, this deponent, did immediately dash into a vigorous, brilliant, humorous, pathetic, eloquent, fervid, and impassioned speech. That the said speech was enlivened by thirteen hundred persons, with frequent, vehement, uproarious, and deafening cheers, and to the best of this deponent's knowledge and belief, he, this deponent, did speak up like a man, and did, to the best of his knowledge and belief, considerably distinguish himself. That after the proceedings of the opening were over, and a vote of thanks was proposed to this deponent, he, this deponent, did again distinguish himself, and that the cheering at

that time, accompanied with clapping of hands and stamping of feet, was in this deponent's case thundering and awful. And this deponent further saith, that his white-and-black or magpie waistcoat did create a strong sensation, and that during the hours of promenading, this deponent heard from persons surrounding him such exclamations as, "What is it? *Is* it a waistcoat? No, it's a shirt"—and the like—all of which this deponent believes to have been complimentary and gratifying; but this deponent further saith that he is now going to supper, and wishes he may have an appetite to eat it.

CHARLES DICKENS.

Sworn before me, at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, on the 26th of February, 1844.
S. RADLEY.

The foregoing reference to the sensation created by the "magpie waistcoat" may appropriately introduce a characteristic note to Macready, written a little later (October 17, 1845), and amusingly illustrative of Dickens's somewhat fantastic taste in dress:

"MY DEAR MACREADY: You once—only once—gave the world assurance of a waistcoat. You wore it, sir, I think, in 'Money.' It was a remarkable and precious waistcoat, wherein certain broad stripes of blue or purple disported themselves as by a combination of extraordinary circumstances, too happy to occur again. I have seen it on your manly chest in private life. I saw it, sir, I think, the other day, in the cold light of morning, with feelings easier to be imagined than described. Mr. Macready, sir, are you a father? If so, lend me that waist-

coat for five minutes. I am bidden to a wedding (where fathers are made), and my artist can not, I find (how should he?), imagine such a waistcoat. Let me show it to him as a sample of my tastes and wishes, and—ha, ha, ha, ha!—eclipse the bridegroom.

"I will send a trusty messenger at half-past nine precisely in the morning. He is sworn to secrecy. He durst not for his life betray us, or swells in ambuscade would have the waistcoat at the cost of his heart's blood.

"Thine,

"The Unwaistcoated One."

Almost immediately after the return from the Manchester meeting an idea had occurred to Dickens which bore the happiest fruits not only for that year but for many following years; and so completely did the inspiration possess him that by the end of November the famous "Christmas Carol" was finished. Sending a copy of it, after it was published, to Professor Felton, he says (in a letter dated January 2, 1844):

"Now, if instantly on the receipt of this you will send a free and independent citizen down to the Cunard Wharf at Boston, you will find . . . a small parcel, and in that parcel you will find a 'Christmas Carol' in prose; being a short story for Christmas by Charles Dickens. Over which Christmas Carol Charles Dickens wept and laughed and wept again, and excited himself in a most extraordinary manner in the composition; and thinking whereof he walked about the black streets of London, fifteen and twenty miles, many a night when all

the sober folks had gone to bed. . . . Its success is most prodigious. And by every post all manner of strangers write all manner of letters to him about their homes and hearths, and how this same Carol is read aloud there, and kept on a little shelf by itself. Indeed, it is the greatest success, as I am told, that this ruffian and rascal has ever achieved."

Among those who so wrote to the author of the "Carol" was Jeffrey, the veteran critic, who said: "Blessings on your kind heart! you should be happy yourself, for you may be sure you have done more good by this little publication, fostered more kindly feelings, and prompted more positive acts of beneficence, than can be traced to all the pulpits and confessionals in Christendon since Christmas, 1842." And Thackeray said: "Who can listen to objections regarding such a book as this? It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it a personal kindness."

All this time, "Martin Chuzzlewit" was being carried steadily forward. The first number was published in January, 1843, and successive numbers regularly month by month until its completion in July, 1844, when the entire story was published in a volume dedicated to Miss Burdett Coutts. But, in spite of Sairey Gamp and Mrs. Harris, Pecksniff, Mr. Mould, and others of the group who have since come to be among the best known of all Dickens's creations, the success of the story was far below what had been anticipated

by both author and publishers. While the sale of "Pickwick" had reached forty thousand, "Nickleby" fifty thousand, and "Master Humphrey's Clock" sixty to seventy thousand, that of "Chuzzlewit" was barely twenty thousand in the earlier numbers. The introduction of the American episode increased the sale somewhat; but, though the book has since ranked in popularity next after "Pickwick" and "Copperfield," the highest number reached at any time before the close of the story was twenty-three thousand.

This was a grievous disappointment to Dickens. Not only did it suggest the possibility that his popularity had permanently declined, but it involved such a reduction of current income as he had by no means calculated upon or prepared for. Even the "Carol," which had been undertaken with the special design of making up the Chuzzlewit deficiency, was a disappointment in this respect. Though its success was enormous, yet the expenses had been adjusted to a scale so disproportionate to the price at which it had to be sold that the author's profits were far less than he had allowed himself to hope.

Following close upon these disappointments, and as a part of them, a misunderstanding with his publishers occurred; and the upshot of the whole situation was that Dickens resolved upon a step, the nature and results of which had better form the subject of another chapter.

VIII.

RESIDENCE IN ITALY.

The difficulties and disappointments which led to the apparently eccentric resolve on Dickens's part to absent himself for a time from England have been referred to in the previous chapter; but, in order to understand the motives which influenced him, it will be necessary to go into the matter more in detail. And this will carry us back, for a moment, to the very beginning of "Martin Chuzzlewit."

The terms agreed upon for this story had been based upon expectations which were more than justified by the success of all that Dickens had previously written. During its publication he was to receive £200 monthly, which sum was to be accounted as part of the expenses; all of which, together with all the risks, were assumed by the publishers. Over and above this, out of the profits of each number, Dickens was to receive three fourths and the publishers one fourth, until the termination of six months from the publication of the completed book, when, upon the payment to him of a fourth of the value of all existing stock, they were to have half the future interest. During the twelve months' interval between the date of the agreement and the time when the book was to begin, he was to be paid £150 each month, which was to

be charged against his three fourths of the profits. And a further provision was inserted to the effect that, in the improbable event of the profits being inadequate to the repayment of the sums thus advanced, the publishers were to have power to withhold £50 a month out of the £200 payable for authorship in the expenses of each number.

This last unlucky clause was regarded as unimportant at the time, but through the ill success of "Martin Chuzzlewit," and the indiscretion of one of the publishers, it became the most significant in the entire agreement. Says Mr. Forster: "The fifth number, which landed Martin and Mark in America, and the sixth, which described their first experiences, were published; and on the eve of the seventh, in which Mrs. Gamp was to make her first appearance, I heard with infinite pain that from Mr. Hall, the younger partner of the firm which had enriched itself by 'Pickwick' and 'Nickleby,' and a very kind, well-disposed man, there had dropped an inconsiderate hint to the writer of those books that it might be desirable to put the clause in force. It had escaped him without his thinking of all that it involved; certainly the senior partner, whatever amount of as thoughtless sanction he had at the moment given to it, always much regretted it, and made endeavors to exhibit his regret; but the mischief was done, and for the time was irreparable."

"I am so irritated," Dickens wrote to Forster on the 28th of June, 1843, "so rubbed in the tenderest part of my eyelids with bay salt, by what I told you yesterday, that a wrong kind of fire is burning in my head, and I don't think I *can* write. Nevertheless, I am trying. In case I should succeed, and should not come down to you this morning, shall you be at the club or elsewhere after dinner? I am bent on paying the money. And before going into the matter with anybody I should like you to propound from me the one preliminary question to Bradbury & Evans. It is more than a year and a half since Clowes wrote to urge me to give him a hearing, in case I should ever think of altering my plans. A printer is better than a bookseller, and it is quite as much the interest of one (if not more) to join me. But whoever it is, or whatever, I am bent upon paying Chapman & Hall *down*. And, when I have done that, Mr. Hall shall have a piece of my mind."

The desired overtures were made to Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, but these gentlemen, taken by surprise perhaps at the suddenness of the suggestion, shrank from assuming the expenses both of printing and of publication, unless Dickens would authorize the reissue of his writings in cheap form, or would start a new magazine. In this emergency, Dickens's thoughts turned to another scheme, the nature of which he explained in a letter to Mr. Forster, dated 1st November, 1843:

"Don't be startled by the novelty and extent of my project. Both startled *me* at first; but I am well as-

sured of its wisdom and necessity. I am afraid of a magazine—just now. I don't think the time a good one, or the chances favorable. I am afraid of putting myself before the town as writing tooth and nail for bread, headlong, after the close of a book taking so much out of one as 'Chuzzlewit.' I am afraid I could not do it, with justice to myself. I know that whatever we may say at first, a new magazine, or a new anything, would require so much propping that I should be *forced* (as in the 'Clock') to put myself into it, in my old shape. I am afraid of Bradbury & Evans's desire to force on the cheap issue of my books, or any of them, prematurely. I am sure, if it took place yet awhile, it would damage me and damage the property, *enormously*. It is very natural in them to want it; but, since they do want it, I have no faith in their regarding me in any other respect than they would regard any other man in a speculation. I see that this is really your opinion as well; and I don't see what I gain, in such a case, by leaving Chapman & Hall. If I had made money, I should unquestionably fade away from the public eye for a year, and enlarge my stock of description and observation by seeing countries new to me; which it is most necessary to me that I should see, and which with an increasing family* I can scarcely hope to see at all, unless I see them now. Already for some time I have had this hope and intention before me; and, though not having made money yet, I find or fancy that I can put myself in the position to accomplish it. And this is the course I have before me. At the close of 'Chuzzlewit' (by which time the debt will have been materially reduced) I purpose drawing

* A fifth child and third son (Francis Jeffrey) was born on the 15th of January, 1844.

from Chapman & Hall my share of the subscription—bills, or money, will do equally well. I design to tell them that it is not likely I shall do anything for a year; that, in the mean time, I make no arrangement whatever with any one; and our business matters rest *in statu quo*. The same to Bradbury & Evans. I shall let the house if I can; if not, leave it to be let. I shall take all the family, and two servants—three at most—to some place which I know beforehand to be CHEAP and in a delightful climate, in Normandy or Brittany, to which I shall go over, first, and where I shall rent some house for six or eight months. During that time, I shall walk through Switzerland, cross the Alps, travel through France and Italy; take Kate perhaps to Rome and Venice, but not elsewhere; and in short see everything that is to be seen. I shall write my descriptions to you from time to time, exactly as I did in America; and you will be able to judge whether or not a new and attractive book may not be made on such ground. At the same time I shall be able to turn over the story I have in my mind, and which I have a strong notion might be published with great advantage, *first in Paris*—but that's another matter to be talked over. And of course I have not yet settled, either, whether any book about the travel, or this, should be the first. 'All very well,' you say, 'if you had money enough.' Well, but if I can see my way to what would be necessary without binding myself in any form to anything; without paying interest, or giving any security but one of my Eagle five thousand pounds; you would give up that objection. And I stand committed to no bookseller, printer, money-lender, banker, or patron whatever; and decidedly strengthen my position with my readers, instead of weakening it, drop by drop, as I

otherwise must. Is it not so? and is not the way before me, plainly this? I infer that in reality you do yourself think that what I first thought of is *not* the way? I have told you my scheme very badly, as I said I would. I see its great points, against many prepossessions the other way—as, leaving England, home, friends, everything I am fond of—but it seems to me, at a critical time, *the* step to set me right. A blessing on Mr. Mariotti my Italian master, and his pupil!"

Mr. Forster's answer being discouraging, Dickens wrote again next day (November 2d) as follows:

"I expected you to be startled. If I was startled myself, when I first got this project of foreign travel into my head, MONTHS AGO, how much more must you be, on whom it comes fresh: numbering only hours! Still, I am very resolute upon it—very. I am convinced that my expenses abroad would not be more than half of my expenses here; the influence of change and nature upon me, enormous. You know, as well as I, that I think 'Chuzzlewit' in a hundred points immeasurably the best of my stories. That I feel my power now, more than I ever did. That I have a greater confidence in myself than I ever had. That I *know*, if I have health, I could sustain my place in the minds of thinking men, though fifty writers started up to-morrow. But how many readers do *not* think? How many take it upon trust from knaves and idiots, that one writes too fast, or runs a thing to death! How coldly did this very book go on for months, until it forced itself up in people's opinion, without forcing itself up in sale! If I wrote for forty thousand Forsters, or for forty thousand people

who know I write because I can't help it, I should have no need to leave the scene. But this very book warns me that, if I *can* leave it for a time, I had better do so, and must do so. Apart from that again, I feel that longer rest after this story would do me good. You say two or three months, because you have been used to see me for eight years never leaving off. But it is not rest enough. It is impossible to go on working the brain to that extent for ever. The very spirit of the thing, in doing it, leaves a horrible despondency behind, when it is done; which must be prejudical to the mind, so soon renewed, and so seldom let alone. What would poor Scott have given to have gone abroad, of his own free will, a young man, instead of creeping there, a driveler, in his miserable decay! I said myself in my note to you —anticipating what you put to me—that it was a question *what* I should come out with, first. The travel-book, if to be done at all, would cost me very little trouble; and surely would go very far to pay charges, whenever published. We have spoken of the baby, and of leaving it here with Catherine's mother. Moving the children into France could not, in any ordinary course of things, do them anything but good. And the question is, what it would do to that by which they live: not what it would do to them.—I had forgotten that point in the B. & E. negotiation; but they certainly suggested instant publication of the reprints, or at all events of some of them; by which of course I know, and as you point out, I could provide of myself what is wanted. I take that as putting the thing distinctly as a matter of trade, and feeling it so. And, as a matter of trade with them or anybody else, as a matter of trade between me and the public, should I not be better off a year hence, with the reputa-

tion of having seen so much in the mean time? The reason which induces you to look upon this scheme with dislike—separation for so long a time—surely has equal weight with me. I see very little pleasure in it, beyond the natural desire to have been in those great scenes; I anticipate no enjoyment at the time. I have come to look upon it as a matter of policy and duty. I have a thousand other reasons, but shall very soon myself be with you."

The final result of much deliberation and discussion was that Dickens withdrew from his connection with Messrs. Chapman & Hall, and entered into an agreement with Messrs. Bradbury & Evans (dated June 1, 1844), by which, upon advance made to him of £2,800, he assigned to them a fourth share in whatever he might write during the next eight years. No interest was to be paid on the sum thus advanced, and no obligations were imposed as to what works should be written, except that it was understood that a successor to the "Carol" should be ready for the Christmas of 1844. The only further stipulation was that in the event of a periodical being undertaken whereof Dickens should be only partially editor and author, then he should receive two thirds of the profits of such periodical instead of three fourths.

By the time this agreement was signed, Dickens had definitely fixed upon Genoa as the place of his sojourn abroad; and, having found a tenant

for the house in Devonshire Terrace, the preparations for departure were pushed rapidly forward. A farewell dinner, with Lord Normanby in the chair, and the great painter, Turner, among the guests, was given him at Greenwich ; and by the middle of July, the family party,* having traveled through France in a vast coach which Dickens had bought for the purpose in London, were on the borders of Italy.

The remaining months of summer were passed in a villa at Albaro, a suburb of Genoa, which had been taken for him by his friend Angus Fletcher. Here Dickens surrendered himself to that rest and idleness which he had craved so eagerly : wandering about the streets of Genoa, with which he soon became as familiar as with those of London ; frequenting the theatres ; mingling somewhat more freely than usual with general society; learning the Italian language ; nursing himself

* The party included, besides the immediate family, Miss Georgina Hogarth, Mrs. Dickens's younger sister, who had now become a permanent member of the household. A character-sketch found in a note-book which Dickens began to keep in January, 1855, is said by Mr. Forster to have been suggested by Miss Hogarth, or at least to be applicable to her: "She—sacrificed to children, and sufficiently rewarded. From a child herself, always 'the children' (of somebody else) to engross her. And so it comes to pass that she is never married ; never herself has a child ; is always devoted to 'the children' (of somebody else) ; and they love her ; and she has always youth dependent on her till her death—and dies quite happily."

through a short but sharp attack of illness, which came on with the old "unspeakable and agonizing pain in the side"; and writing copious letters to his friends at home. The most piquant of these letters is one which he wrote to Mr. Maclise, and which may be quoted as a specimen of them all:

VILLA DI BAGNARELLO, ALBARO,
Monday, *July* 22, 1844.

"MY VERY DEAR MAC: I address you with something of the lofty spirit of an exile—a banished commoner—a sort of Anglo-Pole. I don't exactly know what I have done for my country in coming away from it; but I feel it is something—something great—something virtuous and heroic. Lofty emotions rise within me, when I see the sun set on the blue Mediterranean. I am the limpet on the rock. My father's name is Turner, and my boots are green.

"Apropos of blue. In a certain picture, called 'The Serenade,' you painted a sky. If you ever have occasion to paint the Mediterranean, let it be exactly of that color. It lies before me now, as deeply and intensely blue. But no such color is above me. Nothing like it. In the south of France—at Avignon, at Aix, at Marseilles—I saw deep-blue skies (not *so* deep though—O Lord, no!), and also in America; but the sky above me is familiar to my sight. Is it heresy to say that I have seen its twin-brother shining through the window of Jack Straw's—that down in Devonshire I have seen a better sky? I dare say it is; but, like a great many other heresies, it is true.

"But such green—green—green—as flutters in the vineyard down below the windows, *that* I never saw nor

yet such lilac and such purple as float between me and the distant hills; nor yet—in anything—picture, book, or verbal boredom—such awful, solemn, impenetrable blue, as is that same sea. It has such an absorbing, silent, deep, profound effect, that I can't help thinking it suggested the idea of Styx. It looks as if a draught of it—only so much as you could scoop up on the beach, in the hollow of your hand—would wash out everything else, and make a great blue blank of your intellect.

"When the sun sets clearly, then, by Heaven, it is majestic! From any one of eleven windows here, or from a terrace overgrown with grapes, you may behold the broad sea; villas, houses, mountains, forts, strewn with rose-leaves—strewn with thorns—stifled in thorns. Dyed through and through and through. For a moment. No more. The sun is impatient and fierce, like everything else in these parts, and goes down headlong. Run to fetch your hat—and it's night. Wink at the right time of black night—and it's morning. Everything is in extremes. There is an insect here (I forget its name, and Fletcher and Roche are both out) that chirps all day. There is one outside the window now. The chirp is very loud, something like a Brobdingnagian grasshopper. The creature is born to chirp—to progress in chirping—to chirp louder, louder, louder—till it gives one tremendous chirp, and bursts itself. That is its life and death. Everything 'is in a concatenation accordingly.' The day gets brighter, brighter, brighter, till it's night. The summer gets hotter, hotter, hotter, till it bursts. The fruit gets riper, riper, riper, till it tumbles down and rots.

"Ask me a question or two about fresco—will you be so good? All the houses are painted in fresco here-

about—the outside walls I mean; the fronts, and backs, and sides—and all the color has run into damp and green seediness, and the very design has straggled away into the component atoms of the plaster. Sometimes (but not often) I can make out a Virgin with a mildewed glory round her head; holding nothing, in an indiscernible lap, with invisible arms; and occasionally the leg or arms of a cherub, but it is very melancholy and dim. There are two old fresco-painted vases outside my own gate—one on either hand—which are so faint that I never saw them till last night; and only then because I was looking over the wall after a lizard, who had come upon me while I was smoking a cigar above, and crawled over one of those embellishments to his retreat. There is a church here—the Church of the Annunciation—which they are now (by 'they' I mean certain noble families) restoring at a vast expense, as a work of piety. It is a large church, with a great many little chapels in it, and a very high dome. Every inch of this edifice is painted, and every design is set in a great gold frame or border elaborately wrought. You can imagine nothing so splendid. It is worth coming the whole distance to see. But every sort of splendor is in perpetual enactment through the means of these churches. Gorgeous processions in the streets, illuminations of windows on festa nights; lighting up of lamps and clustering of flowers before the shrines of saints; all manner of show and display. The doors of the churches stand wide open; and in this hot weather great red curtains flutter and wave in their places; and, if you go and sit in one of these to get out of the sun, you see the queerest figures kneeling against pillars, and the strangest people passing in and out, and vast streams

of women in veils (they don't wear bonnets), with great fans in their hands, coming and going, that you are never tired of looking on. Except in the churches, you would suppose the city (at this time of year) to be deserted, the people keep so close within doors. Indeed, it is next to impossible to go out in the heat. I have only been into Genoa twice myself. We are deliciously cool here, by comparison; being high, and having the sea-breeze. There is always some shade in the vineyard, too; and underneath the rocks on the seashore, so if I choose to saunter I can do it easily, even in the hot time of the day. I am as lazy, however, as—as you are, and do little but eat and drink and read.

"As I am going to transmit regular accounts of all sight-seeings and journeyings to Forster, who will show them to you, I will not bore you with descriptions, however. I hardly think you allow enough for the great brightness and brilliancy of color which is commonly achieved on the Continent in that same fresco-painting. I saw some—by a French artist and his pupil—in progress at the cathedral at Avignon, which was as bright and airy as anything can be—nothing dull or dead about it; and I have observed quite fierce and glaring colors elsewhere.

"We have a piano now (there was none in the house), and have fallen into a pretty settled easy track. We breakfast about half-past nine or ten, dine about four, and go to bed about eleven. We are much courted by the visiting people, of course, and I very much resort to my old habit of bolting from callers, and leaving their reception to Kate. Green figs I have already learned to like. Green almonds (we have them at dessert every day) are the most delicious fruit in the world. And

green lemons, combined with some rare hollands that is to be got here, make prodigious punch, I assure you. You ought to come over, Mac; but I don't expect you, though I am sure it would be a very good move for you. I have not the smallest doubt of that. . . .

"Write to me as often as you can, like a dear good fellow, and rely on the punctuality of my correspondence. Losing you and Forster is like losing my arms and legs, and dull and lame I am without you. But at Broadstairs next year, please God, when it is all over, I shall be very glad to have laid up such a store of recollections and improvement. . . .

"Your Affectionate Friend."

The "regular accounts of all sight-seeings and journeyings" were duly transmitted to Mr. Forster, and were subsequently reproduced, first as a series of "Traveling Letters written on the Road" in the "Daily News" (beginning January 21, 1846), and afterward in the little volume of "Pictures from Italy." Dickens's life in and impressions of Italy are so faithfully depicted in that volume that we are absolved from the necessity of giving any detailed record of them here.

Late in September he removed to Genoa for the winter and took up his residence in the Palazzo Peschiere (Palace of the Fish-ponds), the largest palace in the city let on hire, which stood on a commanding height, surrounded by its own gardens. As soon as he was established here, he set to work upon his Christmas story, the title of

which was announced to Mr. Forster in a note containing only the words, "We have heard THE CHIMES at midnight, Master Shallow!" At the beginning, he so missed the London streets, about which, under such circumstances, he was accustomed to wander at night, that he could hardly go on; but, when he had once gotten fairly into the story, he worked with unusual energy, and in a month it was nearly finished. Writing of it to Douglas Jerrold, in a letter dated October 16, 1844, he says: "I have tried to strike a blow upon that part of the brass countenance of wicked Cant, where such a compliment is sorely needed at this time, and I trust that the result of my training is at least the exhibition of a strong desire to make it a staggerer." And when it was completed, he wrote (November 5th): "I believe I have written a tremendous book, and knocked the 'Carol' out of the field. It will make a great uproar, I have no doubt."

While writing "The Chimes," Dickens had resolved to take it himself to England, and read it to some of his friends there before publication; and as soon as it was finished he left Genoa; visited Parma, Modena, Bologna, Ferrara, Venice, Verona, and Mantua; turned north by Milan and Turin; crossed the Alps on sledges by the pass of the Simplon; took Friburg and Strasburg *en route* to Paris; and, on November 30th, reached London and "rushed into the arms of Mac and Forster."

The proposed reading came off at Forster's chambers on the evening of December 3d to a select few, which included Carlyle, Jerrold, Maclise, Stanfield, Harness, and Dyce; and the success was so great that he was induced to repeat it to a somewhat larger circle two nights afterward. By the 13th he was back in Paris on his return journey, and by the 22d he had resumed his ordinary life at Genoa.

Before the end of the year he was cheered by news of the great success and popularity of "The Chimes"; and early in 1845 he began to contemplate a return to England with his family. In February he went with his wife to Rome for the Carnival, leaving his sister-in-law and children at Genoa, Miss Hogarth joining them later on at Naples, where Dickens made his memorable ascent of Vesuvius. They all returned to Rome for the Holy Week, and then went to Florence, and so back to Genoa. They remained at Genoa until June, when they returned to England by Switzerland and Belgium, reaching home at the end of June, 1845.

IX.

IN ENGLAND AGAIN.

The family was scarcely established in Devonshire Terrace, when Dickens was once more immersed in a number of projects and plans, to which he devoted himself with characteristic energy. The first of these projects, the idea of which he had conceived within three weeks of his return, was for a weekly periodical to be called "The Cricket," and to embody "*Carol* philosophy, cheerful views, sharp anatomization of humbug, jolly good temper, . . . and a vein of glowing, hearty, generous, mirthful, beaming reference in everything to home and fireside." This scheme was ultimately abandoned in favor of a larger one which will be mentioned by and by; but the idea which it involved had taken such a hold upon Dickens's fancy that he could not give it up, and it finally took the shape of "The Cricket on the Hearth: A Fairy Tale of Home," which formed the Christmas story of 1845, and attained a sale double that of both its predecessors.

Another project which caught Dickens's attention almost immediately upon his return, and into which he flung himself with the utmost energy of his nature, was a series of amateur plays, which were produced under his management, and with Douglas Jerrold, Mark Lemon, John Leech, Frank

Stone, Gilbert A'Beckett, Forster, Leigh, and others as his fellow actors. The first performance was given on the 21st of September, at Miss Kelly's theatre in Dean Street, and the play selected was Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humor," in which Dickens acted Captain Bobadil, as he had previously done at Montreal. This first performance was a private one, intended merely as an entertainment for the actors and their friends; but its success, to quote the narrative prefixed to the recently published "Letters," "speedily led to a repetition of the same performance, and afterward to many other performances for public and charitable objects. 'Every Man in his Humor' was shortly after repeated at the same little theatre, for a useful charity which needed help; and later in the year Beaumont and Fletcher's play of 'The Elder Brother' was given by the same company, at the same place, for the benefit of Miss Kelly. There was a farce played after the comedy on each occasion—not always the same one—in which Charles Dickens and Mark Lemon were the principal actors."

Greatly as Dickens's acting contributed to the success of these performances, we have Mr. Forster's testimony that this was as nothing to the service he rendered as manager. "He was the life and soul of the entire affair. I never seemed till then to have known his business capabilities. He took everything on himself, and did the whole

of it without an effort. He was stage-director, very often stage-carpenter, scene-arranger, property-man, prompter, and band-master. Without offending any one he kept every one in order. For all he had useful suggestions, and the dullest of clays under his potter's hand were transformed into little bits of porcelain. He adjusted scenes, assisted carpenters, invented costumes, devised play-bills, wrote out calls, and enforced as well as exhibited in his proper person everything of which he urged the necessity on others. Such a chaos of dirt, confusion, and noise, as the little theatre was the day we entered it, and such a cosmos as he made it of cleanliness, order, and silence, before the rehearsals were over!"

The larger project which we have mentioned as having superseded the proposed weekly periodical was no less than a new daily newspaper, which should be kept free, as the prospectus said, from personal influence and party bias; which should be devoted to the advocacy of all rational and honest means by which wrong might be redressed, just rights maintained, and the happiness and welfare of society promoted; and which should supply everything in the first style of newspaper talent for the price of twopence-halfpenny. At first, Dickens had only designed going into the enterprise with a number of his friends, of whom Forster was one; but he was persuaded, against Forster's advice, to consent to the use of

his name, and in the advertisements of the "Daily News" Dickens was announced as "the head of the literary department."

The first number appeared on the 21st of January, and contained the first installment of Dickens's "Pictures from Italy"; but, in spite of the interest aroused by Dickens's connection with it, the new journal did not prove so successful as was expected, and both he and his friends very soon saw that he had taken a false step. With all his versatility and capacity for work, Dickens was peculiarly unsuited to the duties of a daily political newspaper; and, as soon as he had convinced himself of that fact, he retired from participation in the enterprise, not, it is understood, without considerable loss in money. His place as editor was taken by Mr. Forster; but the letters descriptive of his Italian travels were to continue, and for the time during which they were to appear Dickens consented to contribute other occasional letters on important social questions.

Dickens's editorial relations with the "Daily News" lasted in all less than three weeks (he resigned February 9th), but even before they were severed he was revolving plans for going abroad again to write a new book in shilling numbers. The brief glimpses of Switzerland which he had obtained in his journeys to and from Italy had kindled his fancy and aroused his enthusiasm; and he resolved to make his summer residence at

Lausanne, where he took a villa (Rosemont) from May till November. Between the doing of a deed and its first motion, the interim was seldom very long with Dickens; and, having let his house in Devonshire Terrace for a year, he left England on the 31st of May with his entire family.*

X.

SECOND SOJOURN ABROAD.

The journey to Switzerland was made by way of the Rhine as far as Strasburg, whence they went by rail to Basle, arriving at the latter place on the 8th of June. Next day they started for Lausanne in three coaches, with two horses to each, and the journey occupied three days. Lausanne was reached on the 11th, and two days later they were settled in the little villa of Rosemont, which Dickens described as quite a doll's house, with two pretty *salons*, a dining-room, hall, and kitchen, on the ground-floor, and just enough bedrooms up stairs to leave the family one to spare. The little house was completely embowered in roses and shrubbery, the surrounding country was "delightful in the extreme," and across the lake

* A sixth child and fourth son (Alfred Tennyson Dickens) had been born on the 28th of October, 1845.

the Alpine wonders were piled up in tremendous grandeur.

To one in whom the love of nature was such a passion as in Dickens the mere scenery of Switzerland was an inspiration, and he soon learned to like the people as well as the country. He thought it the greatest injustice to call them "the Americans of the Continent," and his letters show how keenly he studied their character and customs. Among the English residents that summer at Lausanne he made many pleasant acquaintances, and formed intimate and life-long friendships with M. de Cerjat, whose wife was an Englishwoman, with M. Haldimand, whose name is identified with Lausanne; and with Mr. and Mrs. Watson, of Rockingham Castle, to whom he afterward dedicated "David Copperfield," and with whom he maintained a constant correspondence. "I do not think," he writes in one of the letters of this period, "we could have fallen on better society. It is a small circle certainly, but quite large enough. The Watsons improve very much on acquaintance. Everybody is very well informed; and we are all as social and friendly as people can be, and very merry. We play whist with great dignity and gravity sometimes, interrupted only by the occasional facetiousness of the Inimitable."

Within a week after he had established himself at Rosemont, Dickens mentions his having resumed his nightly ten-mile walks—the sure in-

dication with him that he was engaged in severe mental labor; and within a fortnight he announces to Mr. Forster that, besides clearing off some odds and ends of literary work, he had begun "Dombey and Son." He adds: "I performed this feat yesterday—only wrote the first slip—but there it is, and it is a plunge straight over head and ears into the story. . . . Besides all this, I have really gone with great vigor at the French, where I find myself greatly assisted by the Italian; and am subject to two descriptions of mental fits in reference to the Christmas-book: one, of the suddenest and wildest enthusiasm; one, of solitary and anxious consideration."

The Christmas-book here referred to was "The Battle of Life," which was published for the Christmas of 1846, and dedicated to his "English friends in Lausanne." He had set himself the task of writing this book and four monthly numbers of Dombey before removing to Paris in November; but his fancy was very prolific after his long rest (more than two years had elapsed since the close of "Martin Chuzzlewit"), and he now conceived the ideas which subsequently took form in "The Tale of Two Cities" and in the little sketch of "The Haunted Man."

His fancy, however, outran his other faculties, and he makes frequent mention in his letters of the difficulty he had in getting himself into working trim. Writing to Mr. Forster about this on the

30th of August, he makes a revelation as curious and interesting as any to be found in his entire correspondence :

"You can hardly imagine," he says, "what infinite pains I take, or what extraordinary difficulty I find in getting on FAST. Invention, thank God, seems the easiest thing in the world; and I seem to have such a preposterous sense of the ridiculous, after this long rest, as to be constantly requiring to restrain myself from launching into extravagances in the height of my enjoyment. But the difficulty of going at what I call a rapid pace is prodigious; it is almost an impossibility. I suppose this is partly the effect of two years' ease, and partly of the absence of streets and numbers of figures. I can't express how much I want these. It seems as if they supplied something to my brain, which it can not bear, when busy, to lose. For a week or a fortnight I can write prodigiously in a retired place (as at Broadstairs), and a day in London sets me up again and starts me. But the toil and labor of writing, day after day, without that magic lantern, is IMMENSE!! I don't say this at all in low spirits, for we are perfectly comfortable here, and I like the place very much indeed, and the people are even more friendly and fond of me than they were in Genoa. I only mention it as a curious fact, which I have never had an opportunity of finding out before. *My* figures seem disposed to stagnate without crowds about them. I wrote very little in Genoa (only the 'Chimes'), and fancied myself conscious of some such influence there—but Lord! I had two miles of streets at least, lighted at night, to walk about in; and a great theatre to repair to, every night."

In previous letters he had mentioned that one inducement to choosing Lausanne for a residence had been that Geneva, which contained some streets, was near at hand; and that, if he could get to Paris by the end of November, "it will be just the very point in the story when the life and crowd of that extraordinary place will come vividly to my assistance in writing." A week or two after the date of the above-quoted letter he writes again: "The absence of any accessible streets continues to worry me, now that I have so much to do, in a most singular manner. It is quite a little mental phenomenon. I should not walk in them in the daytime, if they were here, I dare say; but at night I want them beyond description. I don't seem able to get rid of my specters unless I can lose them in crowds."

At one time he was worried to the verge of illness, but a timely visit to Geneva restored his mental tone, and, as the story progressed, and the Christmas-book (which had bothered him grievously) was gotten off his hands, he recovered his spirits, and addressed himself to his task with his customary zest and energy. Perhaps not the least factor in his increased cheerfulness was the news that the first number of "Dombey and Son" had been published (in October, 1846), and that its sale had surpassed that of "Chuzzlewit" by twelve thousand copies.

In intervals of his work Dickens had managed

not only to visit Geneva several times, but to make a short excursion to Chamounix (in August), and another (in September) to the Great St. Bernard. He had also enjoyed visits from Hallam, Talfourd, and other English friends ; and the little "home circle," as he called it, at Lausanne, became dearer to him as the months wore on. There was probably no period of his life when he was more quietly contented and happy ; but with November storms it became necessary to seek winter quarters, and Paris had already been fixed upon. On the 9th of November the third number of Dombey was done ; and on the 16th, after a week spent in preparations and farewells, the journey began, Paris being reached on the 20th.

The stay in Paris extended to February, 1847, with the exception of a week in December, when Dickens ran over to London to see the rehearsal of his Christmas story, dramatized by Albert Smith for Mr. and Mrs. Keeley at the Lyceum. During this brief visit he arranged for the publication of the first cheap edition of his writings, which began accordingly in the following year, in weekly three-half-penny numbers, with new prefaces but no illustrations. Besides writing "Dombey and Son," he describes himself in one of his letters as "seeing Paris—wandering into hospitals, prisons, dead-houses, operas, theatres, concert-rooms, burial-grounds, palaces, and wine-shops. In my unoccupied fortnight of each

month," he adds, "every description of gaudy and ghastly sight has been passing before me in a rapid panorama."

Here he wrote the famous fifth number of "Dombey," in which the death of little Paul is described, and which raised the public enthusiasm to a pitch that had not been equaled since the death of Little Nell. It is said that Thackeray, electrified by the manner in which the incident was told, rushed into the "Punch" office, where Mark Lemon, the editor, was correcting manuscript, and, dashing down the number on the table, said: "There is no writing against such power as this; one has no chance! Read that chapter describing young Paul's death; it is unsurpassed; it is stupendous!" Nor was Jeffrey less powerfully impressed. "Oh, my dear, dear Dickens," he wrote, "what a No. 5 you have given us! I have so cried and sobbed over it last night, and again this morning; and felt my heart purified by those tears, and blessed and loved you for making me shed them; and I never can bless and love you enough. Since the divine Nelly was found dead on her humble couch, beneath the snow and the ivy, there has been nothing like the actual dying of that sweet Paul, in the summer sunshine of that lofty room." In the preface to the completed story Dickens himself gives one of those touches of self-portraiture which render his prefaces so delightful:

"I began this book by the Lake of Geneva, and went on with it for some months in France, before pursuing it in England. The association between the writing and the place of writing is so curiously strong in my mind, that at this day, although I know, in my fancy, every stair in the little midshipman's house, and could swear to every pew in the church in which Florence was married, or to every young gentleman's bedstead in Dr. Blimber's establishment, I yet confusedly imagine Captain Cuttle as secluding himself from Mrs. Mac Stinger among the mountains of Switzerland. Similarly, when I am reminded by any chance of what it was that the waves were always saying, my remembrance wanders for a whole winter's night about the streets of Paris—as I restlessly did with a heavy heart, on the night when I had written the chapter in which my little friend and I parted company."

The sojourn abroad was cut shorter than Dickens had intended it to have been by the illness from scarlet fever of his eldest son, who was at school in London. Leaving the children with their aunt in Paris to be sent for later, he and his wife returned to London at the end of February, 1847.

XI.

AMATEUR THEATRICAL TOURS.

On returning to London, the Devonshire Terrace house being still occupied by the tenant to

whom it had been let, a temporary house was taken in Chester Place, Regent's Park ; and here, on the 18th of April, 1847, a seventh child and fifth son (christened Sydney Smith Haldimand) was born. The greater part of May was spent at Brighton for the benefit of Mrs. Dickens's health, and then the family removed to Broadstairs and remained there during the summer and autumn. By the end of the Broadstairs holiday, the house in Devonshire Terrace was vacant, and they returned to it in October.

All this time "Dombey and Son" was being written and published month by month ; but during the summer, and for several years afterward, much of Dickens's time and energies were given to a pursuit which at all periods of his life occupied a large share of his attention, and which certainly stood next in his affections to his master-passion for literature.

His interest and enthusiasm for the stage in youth and early manhood have already been recorded, and also the zest with which he flung himself into the amateur theatrical performances which took place in 1845, under his management ; but only those who have read all his letters can comprehend how large a part the stage and its affairs filled in his mind at all times. No matter where he might be, nor how absorbing his other pursuits, he never lost an opportunity of attending the theatre ; and, with the exception of his

own great art of writing, there was no other art which he knew so profoundly. The letter which he wrote to Mr. Forster from Italy* shows what his feeling was regarding it in the heyday of his fame as an author; and Mr. William Kent has preserved an anecdote which is as characteristic as any that has been told of him. "Going round by way of Lambeth one afternoon in the early summer of 1870," writes Mr. Kent, "we had skirted the Thames along the Surrey bank, had crossed the river higher up, and on our way back were returning at our leisure through Westminster, when, just as we were approaching the shadow of the old Abbey at Poet's Corner, under the roof-beams of which he was so soon to be laid in his grave, with a rain of tears and flowers, he abruptly asked, 'What do you think would be the realization of one of my most cherished day-dreams?' Adding, instantly, without waiting for my answer: 'To settle down now for the remainder of my life within easy distance of a great theatre, in the direction of which I should hold supreme authority. It should be a house, of course, having a skilled and noble company, and one in every way magnificently appointed. The pieces acted should be dealt with according to my pleasure, and touched up here and there in obedience to my own judgment; the players as well as the plays being absolutely under my command. There,'

* See page 46.

said he, laughingly, and in a glow at the mere fancy, '*that's* my day-dream!'"

In part at least this day-dream was realized during the period at which we have now arrived. Shortly after his return from France, Dickens learned that gentle but improvident Leigh Hunt was suffering from his usual embarrassments, with less than his former ability to deal with them; and the success of the previous amateur plays suggested a ready means of helping him. A scheme was rapidly matured for giving two representations of "Every Man in his Humor," varied by different farces in each place, at Manchester and Liverpool; and among those whose aid was enlisted were Mark Lemon, Douglas Jerrold, George Henry Lewes, Forster, Frank Stone, Augustus Egg, John Leech, George Cruikshank, and Dudley Costello—the general management and supreme control being given to Dickens. As soon as the enterprise and its object were announced, Lord John Russell, always the friend of literature and authors, bestowed upon Hunt a pension of £200 per annum; but, as some past liabilities remained unprovided for, it was determined to give the performances partly for the benefit of Hunt, and partly for the benefit of the dramatic author, Mr. John Poole. They came off accordingly on the 26th of July at Manchester and on the 28th at Liverpool, to the great delight of the audiences, and with the substantial result of con-

tributing about £500 to the benevolent purposes intended.

Later in the year Dickens went to Leeds, to take the chair at a meeting of the Mechanics' Institute, and on the 28th of December he presided at the opening of the Glasgow Athenæum; he and his wife being the guests of Sir Archibald Alison, the historian. On both occasions he made strong speeches in advocacy of popular education which should include the very poorest and most ignorant.

Visiting Edinburgh after the Glasgow meeting, he learned from Jeffrey that Sheridan Knowles, the dramatist, had just been driven into bankruptcy, and the desire to help him led in 1848 to another series of amateur performances, in which the former company was increased by the accession of Mrs. Mary Cowden Clarke. The play chosen was "The Merry Wives of Windsor," with Dickens as Justice Shallow; to which was added a farce, "Love, Law, and Physick," with Dickens as Lawyer Flexible. There were two performances in May at the Haymarket Theatre, London, at one of which the Queen and the Prince Consort were present; and in June and July there were performances at Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Edinburgh, and Glasgow—nine in all. The beneficiary profited even more largely than had been hoped by these performances, the total receipts being over £2,500.

Two years later, in November, 1850, the greater part of the amateur company played for three nights at Knebworth Park, as the guests of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, who entertained all his county neighbors to witness the performances (the play being "Every Man in his Humor," with different farces each night); and early in 1851 there was a performance of "Used Up" and "Animal Magnetism" at Rockingham Castle (the home of the Watsons, his Lausanne friends), in which Dickens and his wife and sister-in-law acted.

During the visit to Knebworth Park a scheme was projected for a "Guild of Literature and Art," which was to found a provident fund for literary men and artists; and this led to the last and most important of these "splendid strollings," as Mr. Forster calls them. Sir E. B. Lytton wrote a new comedy for the company, "Not so Bad as We Seem"; Dickens wrote a farce, "Mr. Nightingale's Diary," for himself and Mark Lemon; and Stanfield, David Roberts, Thomas Grieve, Telbin, Absolon, and Louis Haghe contributed for scenery the finest paintings probably ever seen upon the stage. Wilkie Collins, Charles Knight, and John Tenniel were added to the company; and for the first performance the Duke of Devonshire turned one of the splendid rooms in Devonshire House into a theatre. This occurred on the 27th of May, 1851, the Queen and Prince Con-

sort being present; later in the season there were several public performances in the Hanover Square Rooms, which were highly successful; and at intervals during the two following years many performances were given in the provinces, the whole closing with a great public dinner in Manchester, at which Bulwer made an impressive speech in behalf of the Guild.

During all these performances, besides playing the most important *rôles* in the several plays, Dickens took upon himself the whole labor and responsibility of management. He was, as Mr. Forster says, stage-director, often stage-carpenter, scene-arranger, property-man, prompter, and band-master; and, in addition to all this, he was the life and soul of the enjoyment as well as of the work. Mrs. Mary Cowden Clarke, who played Dame Quickly in "The Merry Wives," has described in her "Recollections of Writers" the way in which Dickens performed his duties as manager:

"Then followed other rehearsals, delightful in the extreme; Charles Dickens ever present, superintending, directing, suggesting, with sleepless activity and vigilance: the essence of punctuality and methodical precision himself, he kept incessant watch that others should be unfailingly attentive and careful throughout. Unlike most professional rehearsals, where waiting about, dawdling, and losing time, seem to be the order of the day, the rehearsals under Charles Dickens's stage-manager-

ship were strictly devoted to work — serious, earnest work. The consequence was that, when the evening of performance came, the pieces went off with a smoothness and polish that belong only to finished stage-business and practiced performers. He was always there among the first arrivers at rehearsals, and remained in a conspicuous position during their progress till the very last moment of conclusion. He had a small table placed rather to one side of the stage, at which he generally sat, as the scenes went on in which he himself took no part. On this table rested a moderate-sized box; its interior divided into convenient compartments for holding papers, letters, etc., and this interior was always the very pink of neatness and orderly arrangement. Occasionally he would leave his seat at the managerial table, and stand with his back to the foot-lights, in the very center of the front of the stage, and view the whole effect of the rehearsed performance as it proceeded, observing the attitudes and positions of those engaged in the dialogue, their mode of entrance, exit, etc., etc. He never seemed to overlook any thing, but to note the very slightest point that conduced to the 'going well' of the whole performance. With all this supervision, however, it was pleasant to remark the utter absence of dictatorialness or arrogation of superiority that distinguished his mode of ruling his troupe: he exerted his authority firmly and perpetually; but in such a manner as to make it universally felt to be for no purpose of self-assertion or self-importance; on the contrary, to be for the sole purpose of insuring general success to their united efforts."

Mr. Forster more than hints that the office was no sinecure, and that Dickens found his mate-

rials tough and unmalleable at times ; but, heavy as was the work which they threw upon him, he derived from these amateur theatricals perhaps the heartiest and keenest enjoyment of his life. He always looked forward to the provincial tours as to a glorious sort of holiday; and his letters, mostly written in character, fairly boil over with fun and jollity. Moreover, he took immense satisfaction in the homage which he received everywhere, and in the success with which the plays went off. Writing to Mrs. Watson about some "very ingenious little contrivances for adapting the difficulties of 'Used Up' to the small stage," he says : "I developed these wonderful ideas to the master-carpenter at one of the theatres, and he shook his head with an intensely mournful air, and said, 'Ah, sir, it's a universal observation in the profession, sir, that it was a great loss to the public when you took to writing books!'"

As to the merit of the performances, there can be no doubt that Dickens, at least, was a most excellent actor. Hans Christian Andersen declares that he was admirable both as a tragedian and a low comedian, and thinks that he would have been admired and applauded even though nobody had known that he was the great novelist ; and a much better authority, Mr. Tom Taylor, says that the acting of Dickens and Lemon was "not only worthy of professional actors, but of a kind not to be found save among the rarest talents." After all,

however, Mr. Forster's more modest estimate is probably near the truth. "Of the thing itself," he writes, "it is necessary to be said that a modicum of merit goes a long way in all such matters, and it would not be safe now to assume that ours was much above the average of amateur attempts in general. Lemon certainly had most of the stuff, conventional as well as otherwise, of a regular actor in him, but this was not of a high kind; and, though Dickens had the title to be called a born comedian, the turn for it being in his very nature, his strength was rather in the vividness and variety of his assumptions, than in the completeness, finish, or ideality he could give to any part of them."

XII.

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS," "DAVID COPPERFIELD," "BLEAK HOUSE," ETC.

In bringing together in a single view the several theatrical tours in which Dickens participated as actor and manager, we have somewhat outrun the chronological sequence of our narrative, and must now pause a moment to gather up the missing links.

Early in 1848 "Dombey and Son" was finished, and immediately afterward Dickens became

busy with the amateur performances for the benefit of Sheridan Knowles. Two or three weeks in March were passed at Brighton with his wife and Mrs. Macready, and the autumn months were again spent at Broadstairs, where he wrote "The Haunted Man," which formed the Christmas story for 1848. Toward the end of the year he took another short holiday at Brighton with his wife and sister-in-law.

Before going to Broadstairs, and just after the toil and turmoil of the theatrical business, he wrote a letter to the Hon. Mrs. Watson, one paragraph from which is worth quoting because it expresses a mood of reflection and melancholy which was very unusual with Dickens :

"Were you all in Switzerland? I don't believe *I* ever was, it is such a dream now. I wonder sometimes whether I ever disputed with a Haldimand; whether I ever drank mulled wine on the top of the Great St. Bernard, or was jovial at the bottom with company that have stolen into my affection; whether I ever was merry and happy in that valley on the Lake of Geneva, or saw you one evening (when I didn't know you) walking down among the green trees outside Elysée, arm-in-arm with a gentleman in a white hat. I am quite clear that there is no foundation for these visions. But I should like to go somewhere, too, and try it all over again. I don't know how it is, but the ideal world in which my lot is cast has an odd effect on the real one and makes it chiefly precious for such remembrances. I get quite melancholy over them sometimes, especially when, as now, those

great piled-up semicircles of bright faces, at which I have lately been looking—all laughing, earnest and intent—have faded away like dead people. They seem a ghostly moral of everything in life to me."

In this same letter sorrowful allusion is made to the failing health of his elder sister Fanny (Mrs. Burnett). Several years previously she had "gone into a consumption," and was now in the last stages of the disease. She died before the summer was over.

Besides writing the Christmas story, Dickens's thoughts were much occupied during all the latter part of this year with the form his next book should assume. Finally, acting upon a suggestion that had been made to him that he should write it in the first person by way of change, he determined to make it autobiographical in substance as well as in form; and after much hesitation over a title, at last settled himself to relate "The Personal History, Adventures, Experience, and Observation of David Copperfield, the Younger, of Blunderstone Rookery." The first number was published in May, 1849, and the popularity secured at the outset increased to a degree that had not been equaled by any of his previous stories except "Pickwick."

The extent to which "David Copperfield" is genuinely autobiographical has already been revealed in the first chapter of this book; and with the aid of that chapter the reader of the story

will find it easy to separate the fact from the fiction. Most of the childish impressions and experiences which open the narrative so pathetically and yet so pleasingly had actually been written out by Dickens as part of a record of his own life before it was determined to make them the basis of a novel; and the author has himself confessed that he found it very difficult to surround them with the needful disguises. Indeed, much more of Dickens's self is in the book than the mere facts of his life; and those who read the later portions of Dora's history in the light of the subsequent events of the author's family experiences will see how much of the real tendency of his thoughts and feelings is laid bare. None of his other stories has been so steadily popular with all classes of readers, but it was less owing to this, probably, than to the fact that it is so largely autobiographical, that the author felt that partiality for it which he confessed in the preface which he wrote for it long afterward. "Of all my books," he said, "I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them. But, like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favorite child. And his name is DAVID COPPERFIELD."

Another project which was conceived in 1849 though not launched until the following year, was the weekly magazine called "Household Words."

It has been seen that the notion of a periodical was a favorite one with Dickens, and that he recurred to it at frequent intervals from the very beginning of his career as author. The "Daily News" scheme had superseded one plan that had been nearly matured; and with Dickens's withdrawal from that enterprise his mind had reverted almost at once to the original idea. In the autumn months of 1849, while at Bonchurch, in the Isle of Wight, whither he had gone with his family instead of to Broadstairs, the project once more took shape, and, the requisite details having been adjusted with Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, the first number of "Household Words" was issued on March 30, 1850 (24 pages, royal 8vo, price 2*d*). In a "Preliminary Word" the editor stated its objects to be to contribute to the entertainment and instruction of all classes of readers, and to help in the discussion of the more important social questions of the time. "It was to comprise short stories by others as well as himself; matters of passing interest in the liveliest form that could be given to them; subjects suggested by books that might most be attracting attention; and poetry in every number if possible, but in any case something of romantic fancy. This was to be a cardinal point. There was to be no mere utilitarian spirit; with all familiar things, but especially those repellent on the surface, something was to be connected that should be fanciful or

kindly; and the hardest workers were to be taught that their lot is not necessarily excluded from the sympathies and graces of imagination." The new paper was very cordially received, and by July 13th Dickens was able to write to a friend: "'Household Words' goes on *thoroughly well.* It is expensive, of course, and demands a large circulation; but it is taking a great and steady stand, and I have no doubt already yields a good round profit."

An assistant editor (Mr. W. H. Wills, whose value he had learned during his brief connection with the "Daily News") relieved Dickens of much of the drudgery inseparable from the conducting of a periodical; but Dickens himself was a most laborious and painstaking editor, and, even when busiest otherwise, supervised each number with the minutest care and attention—filling up gaps with his own pen, and revising, polishing, and often rewriting the contributions of others. In particular, he took upon himself the entire work of arranging and corresponding with authors; and nothing that we know of him is more graceful and characteristic than the gentle considerateness with which, as editor, he dealt with his younger contributors. Here is an example:

"DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,
"*Friday Night, late, February* 21, 1851.

"MY DEAR MISS BOYLE: I have devoted a couple of hours this evening to going very carefully over your

paper (which I had read before) and to endeavoring to bring it closer, and to lighten it, and to give it that sort of compactness which a habit of composition, and of disciplining one's thoughts like a regiment, and of studying the art of putting each soldier into his right place, may have gradually taught me to think necessary. I hope, when you see it in print, you will not be alarmed by my use of the pruning-knife. I have tried to exercise it with the utmost delicacy and discretion, and to suggest to you, especially toward the end, how this sort of writing (regard being had to the size of the journal in which it appears) requires to be compressed, and is made pleasanter by compression. This all reads very solemnly, but only because I want you to read it (I mean the article) with as loving an eye as I have truly tried to touch it with a loving and gentle hand. I propose to call it 'My Mahogany Friend.' The other name is too long, and I think not attractive. Until I go to the office to-morrow and see what is actually in hand, I am not certain of the number in which it will appear, but Georgy shall write on Monday and tell you. We are always a fortnight in advance of the public or the mechanical work could not be done. I think there are many things in it that are *very pretty*. The Katie part is particularly well done. If I don't say more, it is because I have a heavy sense, in all cases, of the responsibility of encouraging any one to enter on that thorny track, where the prizes are so few and the blanks so many; where—

"But I won't write you a sermon. With the fire going out, and the first shadows of a new story hovering in a ghostly way about me (as they usually begin to do, when I have finished an old one), I am in danger of

doing the heavy business, and becoming a heavy guardian, or something of that sort, instead of the light and airy Joe.

"So good night, and believe that you may always trust me, and never find a grim expression (toward you) in any that I wear.

"Ever yours."

The most important domestic events of this period were the birth of his eighth child and sixth son (Henry Fielding, born January 16, 1849), and of his third daughter (Dora Annie, born August 16, 1850). The latter was named for the child-wife in "David Copperfield," whose doom, then swiftly drawing on, foreshadowed that of her little namesake. She was feeble and sickly from her birth, and died suddenly in her nurse's arms, while Dickens was presiding at the annual dinner of the General Theatrical Fund, on the 14th of April, 1851.

Another sorrow that touched Dickens very keenly at this period was the death of his father, which occurred in London on the 31st of March, 1851. An attempt has been made, particularly of late, to cast reproach upon Dickens for his treatment of his parents; the strictures being based principally upon the fact that he is understood to have caricatured his father in Mr. Micawber and his mother in Mrs. Nickleby. A more plausible piece of evidence is the manner in which he speaks of them at the close of the auto-

biographical fragment quoted in our first chapter; but it should be remembered that that was written under the influence of very excited feelings, and it weighs nothing against the unanimous testimony of those who knew the facts, that he was a good son, considerate and affectionate, and supplied liberally all his parents' wants as soon as he had command of money. When he became editor of the "Daily News" he secured his father a good place upon the staff of that journal; and, in all the allusions to the latter's foibles which Mr. Forster quotes from Dickens's letters, a distinct vein of personal fondness mingles with the amusement which they produce. As to the Micawber and Mrs. Nickleby portraitures, it is to be observed (as Mr. Forster has truly said) that their foibles, however laughable, make neither of them in speech or character less lovable; and we are assured by Dr. Shelton Mackenzie, who seems to have been personally acquainted with him, that Mr. John Dickens "considered himself rather complimented in thus being converted into literary 'capital' by his son."

The summer of 1849, as we have already mentioned, was passed at Bonchurch, Isle of Wight, and the summer and autumn of 1850 were spent, as usual, at Broadstairs, where Dickens was busy with the closing numbers of "David Copperfield," which was finished in October. In February of the following year he made a bachelor excursion

to Paris with Mr. Leech and the Hon. Spencer Lyttelton, and immediately afterward was busily occupied in superintending the arrangements for Macready's last appearance on the stage at Drury Lane, and for the great dinner which was given to Macready after it on the 1st of March, with Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton in the chair. This year saw the beginning of those theatrical performances in aid of the Guild which have been described in the preceding chapter, and which occupied much of Dickens's time during this and the year following. The summer and autumn were spent at Broadstairs ; and thence Dickens wrote a letter to the Hon. Mrs. Watson, which is worth quoting for several reasons, but especially for the illustration it affords of the frank and easy comradeship which he maintained in all his relations with children :

"Broadstairs, Kent, *July* 11, 1851.

"My dear Mrs. Watson: I am so desperately indignant with you for writing me that short apology for a note, and pretending to suppose that under any circumstances I could fail to read with interest anything *you* wrote to me, that I have more than half a mind to inflict a regular letter upon you. If I were not the gentlest of men, I should do it!

"Poor, dear Haldimand, I have thought of him so often. That kind of decay is so inexpressibly affecting and piteous to me that I have no words to express my compassion and sorrow. When I was at Abbotsford,

I saw in a vile glass case the last clothes Scott wore; among them an old white hat, which seemed to be tumbled and bent and broken by the uneasy, purposeless wandering, hither and thither, of his heavy head. It so embodied Lockhart's pathetic description of him when he tried to write, and laid down his pen and cried, that it associated itself in my mind with broken powers and mental weakness from that hour. I fancy Haldimand in such another, going listlessly about that beautiful place, and remembering the happy hours we have passed with him, and his goodness and truth. I think what a dream we live in until it seems for the moment the saddest dream that was ever dreamed. Pray tell us if you hear more of him. We really loved him.

"To go to the opposite side of life, let me tell you that a week or so ago I took Charley [Dickens's eldest son] and three of his schoolfellows down the river gypsying. I secured the services of Charley's godfather (an old friend of mine, and a noble fellow with boys), and went down to Slough, accompanied by two immense hampers from Fortnum & Mason, on (I believe) the wettest morning ever seen out of the tropics.

"It cleared before we got to Slough; but the boys, who had got up at four (we being due at eleven), had horrible misgivings that we might not come, in consequence of which we saw them looking into the carriages before us, all face. They seemed to have no bodies whatever, but to be all face; their countenances lengthened to that surprising extent. When they saw us, the faces shut up as if they were upon strong springs, and their waistcoats developed themselves in the usual places. When the first hamper came out of the luggage-van, I was conscious of their dancing behind the guard; when

the second came out with bottles in it, they all stood wildly on one leg. We then got a couple of flys to drive to the boat-house. I put them in the first, but they couldn't sit still a moment, and were perpetually flying up and down like the toy-figures in the sham snuff-boxes. In this order we went on to 'Tom Brown's, the tailor's,' where they all dressed in aquatic costume, and then to the boat-house, where they all cried in shrill chorus for 'Mahogany'—a gentleman so called by reason of his sunburned complexion, a waterman by profession. (He was likewise called during the day 'Hog' and 'Hogany,' and seemed to be unconscious of any proper name whatsoever.) We embarked, the sun shining now, in a galley with a striped awning, which I had ordered for the purpose, and, all rowing hard, went down the river. We dined in a field; what I suffered for fear those boys should get drunk, the struggles I underwent in a contest of feeling between hospitality and prudence, must ever remain untold. I feel, even now, old with the anxiety of that tremendous hour. They were very good, however. The speech of one became thick, and his eyes too like lobsters' to be comfortable, but only temporarily. He recovered, and I suppose outlived the salad he took. I have heard nothing to the contrary, and I imagine I should have been implicated on the inquest if there had been one. We had tea and rashers of bacon at a public-house, and came home, the last five or six miles in a prodigious thunderstorm. This was the great success of the day, which they certainly enjoyed more than anything else. The dinner had been great, and Mahogany had informed them, after a bottle of light champagne, that he never would come up the river 'with ginger company' any more. But

the getting so completely wet through was the culminating part of the entertainment. You never in your life saw such objects as they were; and their perfect unconsciousness that it was at all advisable to go home and change, or that there was anything to prevent their standing at the station two mortal hours to see me off, was wonderful. As to getting them to their dames with any sort of sense that they were damp, I abandoned the idea. I thought it a success when they went down the street as civilly as if they were just up and newly dressed, though they really looked as if you could have rubbed them to rags with a touch, like saturated curl-paper. . . .

"I find that I am 'used up' by the Exhibition. I don't say 'there is nothing in it'—there's too much. I have only been twice; so many things bewildered me. I have a natural horror of sights, and the fusion of so many sights in one has not decreased it. I am not sure that I have seen anything but the fountain and perhaps the Amazon. It is a dreadful thing to be obliged to be false, but when any one says, 'Have you seen ——?' I say, 'Yes,' because, if I don't, I know he'll explain it, and I can't bear that. —— took all the school one day. The school was composed of a hundred 'infants,' who got among the horses' legs in coming to the main entrance from the Kensington Gate, and came walking from between the wheels of coaches undisturbed in mind; got among the horses' legs in crossing to the main entrance from the Kensington Gate, and came reeling out from between the wheels of coaches undisturbed in mind. They were clinging to horses, I am told, all over the park. . . .

"When they were collected and added up by the frantic monitors, they were all right. They were then re-

galed with cake, etc., and went tottering and staring all over the place; the greater part wetting their forefingers and drawing a wavy pattern on every accessible object. One infant strayed. He was not missed. Ninety-and-nine were taken home, supposed to be the whole collection, but this particular infant went to Hammersmith. He was found by the police at night, going round and round the turnpike, which he still supposed to be a part of the Exhibition. He had the same opinion of the police, also of Hammersmith workhouse, where he passed the night. When his mother came for him in the morning, he asked when it would be over. It was a great Exhibition, he said, but he thought it long. . . .

"With love to the boys and girls,

"Ever dear Mrs. Watson,

"Most sincerely yours."

This year (1851) also saw the removal from the house in Devonshire Terrace which had been Dickens's city residence since 1839. The lease having expired, and the family having outgrown its accommodation, he very reluctantly gave it up, and bought a house in Tavistock Square, which he remodeled to suit himself, but which never secured the hold upon his affections that Devonshire Terrace had had. It is characteristic of him, however, that he entered upon the "improvements" with immense zeal and interest; and one of the fancies with which he amused himself while fitting up the library there is referred to in the following letter to Mr. Eeles, a bookbinder:

"'Household Words' Office,
" *Wednesday Evening, October* 22, 1851.

"Dear Mr. Eeles: I send you the list I have made for the book-backs. I should like the 'History of a Short Chancery Suit' to come at the bottom of one recess, and the 'Catalogue of Statues of the Duke of Wellington' at the bottom of the other. If you should want more titles, and will let me know how many, I will send them to you.

"LIST OF IMITATION BOOK-BACKS.
Tavistock House, 1851.

Five Minutes in China. 3 vols.
Forty Winks at the Pyramids. 2 vols.
Abernethy on the Constitution. 2 vols.
Mr. Green's Overland Mail. 2 vols.
Captain Cook's Life of Savage. 2 vols.
A Carpenter's Bench of Bishops. 2 vols.
Toot's Universal Letter-Writer. 2 vols.
Orson's Art of Etiquette.
Downeaster's Complete Calculator.
History of the Middling Ages. 6 vols.
Jonah's Account of the Whale.
Captain Parry's Virtues of Cold Tar.
Kant's Ancient Humbugs. 10 vols.
Bowwowdom. A Poem.
The Quarrelly Review. 4 vols.
The Gunpowder Magazine. 4 vols.
Steele. By the Author of "Ion,"
The Art of Cutting the Teeth.
Matthew's Nursery Songs. 2 vols.
Paxton's Bloomers. 5 vols.
On the Use of Mercury by the Ancient Poets.
Drowsy's Recollections of Nothing. 3 vols.
Heavyside's Conversations with Nobody. 3 vols.
Commonplace-Book of the Oldest Inhabitant. 2 vols.
Growler's Gruffiology, with Appendix. 4 vols.

The Books of Moses and Sons. 2 vols.
Burke (of Edinburgh) on the Sublime and Beautiful. 2 vols.
Teazer's Commentaries.
King Henry the Eighth's Evidences of Christianity. 5 vols.
Miss Biffin on Deportment.
Morrison's Pills Progress. 2 vols.
Lady Godiva on the Horse.
Munchausen's Modern Miracles. 4 vols.
Richardson's Show of Dramatic Literature. 12 vols.
Hansard's Guide to Refreshing Sleep. As many volumes as possible."

Tavistock House was ready in November, and within a fortnight after taking possession of it the first number of "Bleak House" was begun. This number was published in March, 1852; the work was carried steadily forward amid the excitements of the Guild performances and the exacting labors upon "Household Words"; was completed at Boulogne in August, 1853; and was dedicated to the author's "friends and companions in the Guild of Literature and Art." It has never been ranked among the best of Dickens's novels, but its immediate success was enormous, and its sale greatly surpassed that of "Copperfield."

The other writings of this prolific period may as well be mentioned here. While the last numbers of "Bleak House" were being written, Dickens also employed himself in dictating "The Child's History of England," perhaps the least happy of his performances. It was published in "Household Words" between the dates 25th January, 1851, and 10th December, 1853, and subse-

quently in book form, with a dedication to the author's own children. On its completion he began the story of "Hard Times," which also appeared from week to week in "Household Words" between the dates 1st April and 12th August, 1854, and was then published complete in one volume with a dedication to Thomas Carlyle. Resting then for a year, Dickens reverted to the familiar "green leaves," and issued "Little Dorrit" in twenty monthly parts, beginning in December, 1855, and ending in June, 1857. The complete story was published in the latter month, with a dedication to Clarkson Stanfield.

The years covered by these writings was a period of much wandering to and fro on the part of Dickens. Toward the end of 1851 he made a provincial tour with his company for the benefit of the Guild, and in the summer of 1852 hired a house at Dover, whither he went with his family for three months. At the end of this time he sent his children * and servants back to Tavistock House, and, accompanied by his wife and sister-in-law, crossed over to Boulogne to inspect that town and its neighborhood with a view to making it his summer quarters in the following year. The result was so satisfactory that he spent three summers (of 1853, 1854, and 1856) there, and subsequently described it as "Our French Water-

* His last child (the tenth child and seventh son) was born March 13, 1852, and christened Edward Bulwer Lytton.

ing-Place" in "Household Words." The autumn of 1855 was passed at Folkestone, and then, with a short halt at Boulogne, the family proceeded to Paris, where Dickens had decided to spend the winter of 1855–'56. They remained there until the middle of May, 1856, with Dickens himself constantly running backward and forward between Paris and London. He enjoyed the winter greatly, renewing his old friendships, exchanging hospitalities with the French artistic world, and receiving visits from his London friends, including the Rev. James White, Macready, Thackeray, and Wilkie Collins.

But the most important of these Continental wanderings occurred between October and December, 1853, after the completion of the "Child's History," when, in company with Wilkie Collins and Mr. Augustus Egg, the artist, Dickens revisited Italy and Switzerland, and refreshed his impressions of Berne, Lausanne, Genoa, Naples, Rome, Florence, and Venice. It was a genuine holiday, full of hilarity and enjoyment, and Dickens's health, which had been much broken early in the year, was completely restored by it.

Another incident which made this year 1853 a memorable one in Dickens's life was a great banquet given in his honor on January 6th, at Birmingham, when a silver-gilt salver and a diamond ring were presented him, partly in recognition of the services which he had rendered the Institu-

tion, and partly in general testimony to his "varied literary acquirements, genial philosophy, and high moral teaching." It was at this banquet that Dickens made the promise to give two public readings from his books in aid of the new Midland Institute which afterward led to such momentous results. In redemption of this promise he read "The Christmas Carol" in the Town Hall on the 27th of December, and "The Cricket on the Hearth" on the 29th, with such great success that he was induced to give a second reading of the "Carol" on the 30th, making it a condition of his consent that seats should be reserved, at prices within their means, for workingmen. An immense sensation was produced by these readings, and as a natural result Dickens was at once overwhelmed with applications for similar readings elsewhere. With most of these applications he was unable to comply; but, between this time and 1858, when he began those regular professional readings which will be described in a future chapter, he had given readings in nearly all the larger cities of England and Scotland in aid of various charitable and educational institutions.

Among the home amusements at this period, those which were most relished by Dickens and his friends were the children's theatricals, which began with the first Twelfth Night at Tavistock House, and were renewed until the princi-

pal actors had ceased to be children. The play selected for 1854 was Fielding's burlesque of "Tom Thumb," and Dickens's children were assisted by the clever children of Mark Lemon, who, as well as Dickens himself, took a part. One of the younger actors as Lord Grizzle sang the ballad of Miss Villikins with such irresistibly comic effect that Thackeray is said to have rolled off his seat in a burst of laughter. The play chosen for 1855 was Planché's fairy extravaganza of "Fortunio and his Seven Gifted Servants"; and Dickens, Mark Lemon, and Wilkie Collins played with the children. "The bill," says Mr. Forster, "deserves mention for the fun of the six large-lettered announcements which stood at the head of it, and could not have been bettered by Mr. Crummles himself. 'Re-engagement of that irresistible comedian' (the performer of Lord Grizzle) 'Mr. Ainger!' 'Reappearance of Mr. H., who created so powerful an impression last year!' 'Return of Mr. Charles Dickens, Junior, from his German engagements!' 'Engagement of Miss Kate, who declined the munificent offers of the Management last season!' 'Mr. Passé, Mr. Mudperiod, Mr. Measly Servile, and Mr. Wilkini Collini!' 'First appearance on any stage of Mr. Plornishmaroontigoonter (who has been kept out of bed at a vast expense).' The last performer mentioned was yet at some distance from the third year of his age."

Out of the success of these children's theatricals at Tavistock House rose a scheme for a serious play at the same place. Entering into it with his usual zeal, Dickens turned one of the rooms in the house into a very perfect little theatre; Mr. Stanfield painted the scenery and a drop-scene; and Wilkie Collins wrote an "entirely new and original domestic melodrama" entitled "The Lighthouse." This was played for three nights in June, 1855, the actors being Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Mark Lemon, Mr. Egg, and Dickens's sister-in-law and eldest daughter. Among the audiences were many of the notabilities of London, and the success was very great. In 1856 Dickens was abroad with his family; but during the summer of that year Mr. Collins wrote another play, "The Frozen Deep," which was played in January, 1857, at the Tavistock House Theatre, with such prodigious success that it was necessary to repeat it several times; and later in the year, on the death of Douglas Jerrold, several public subscription performances of the play were given for the benefit of his family.

By this time, however, Dickens had changed his residence for the last time, and established himself in a house which deserves a chapter by itself.

XIII.

GAD'S HILL PLACE.

In a letter to M. de Cerjat, one of his Swiss friends, dated January 17, 1857, Dickens says: "Down at Gad's Hill, near Rochester, in Kent—Shakespeare's Gad's Hill, where Falstaff engaged in the robbery—is a quaint little country house of Queen Anne's time. I happened to be walking past, a year and a half or so ago, with my sub-editor of 'Household Words,' when I said to him: 'You see that house? It has always a curious interest for me, because when I was a small boy down in these parts I thought it the most beautiful house (I suppose because of its famous old cedar trees) ever seen. And my poor father used to bring me to look at it, and used to say that if ever I grew up to be a clever man, perhaps I might own that house or such another house. In remembrance of which I have always in passing looked to see if it was to be sold or let, and it has never been to me like any other house, and it has never changed at all.' We came back to town, and my friend went out to dinner. Next morning he came to me in great excitement, and said: 'It is written that you were to have that house at Gad's Hill. The lady I had allotted to me to take down to dinner yesterday began to speak of that neighborhood. 'You know it?'

I said ; 'I have been there to-day.' 'Oh, yes,' said she, 'I know it very well. I was a child there, in the house they call Gad's Hill Place. My father was the rector, and lived there many years. He has just died, has left it to me, and I want to sell it.' 'So,' says the sub-editor, 'you must buy it. Now or never!' I did, and hope to pass next summer there, though I may, perhaps, let it afterward, furnished, from time to time."

Another version of this pretty story is told by Dickens in the "Uncommercial Traveler," under the head of "Traveling Abroad," No. VII. :

"So smooth was the old high-road, and so fresh were the horses, and so fast went I, that it was midway between Gravesend and Rochester, and the widening river was bearing the ships, white-sailed or black-smoked, out to sea, when I noticed by the way side a very queer small boy.

"'Holloa!' said I to the very queer small boy, 'where do you live?'

"'At Chatham,' says he.

"'What do you do there?' says I.

"'I go to school,' says he.

"I took him up in a moment, and we went on. Presently, the very queer small boy says, 'This is Gad's Hill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travelers, and ran away.'

"'You know something about Falstaff, eh?' said I.

"'All about him,' said the very queer small boy. 'I am old (I am nine), and I read all sorts of books. But *do* let us stop at the top of the hill, and look at the house there, if you please!'

"'You admire that house?' said I.

"'Bless you, sir,' said the very queer small boy, 'when I was not more than half as old as nine, it used to be a treat for me to be brought to look at it. And now I am nine I come by myself to look at it. And ever since I can recollect, my father, seeing me so fond of it, has often said to me, *If you were to be very persevering, and were to work hard, you might some day come to live in it.* Though that's impossible!' said the very queer small boy, drawing a low breath, and staring at the house out of window with all his might.

"I was rather amazed to be told this by the very queer small boy, for that house happens to be *my* house, and I have reason to believe that what he said was true."

This, like many similar passages, in Dickens's writings, was a genuine bit of autobiography; and the purchase of Gad's Hill Place in the spring of 1856 was indeed the fulfillment of one of the most cherished wishes of his life. It was chiefly because it was so, and not because he designed at the time to make it his permanent home, that he embraced so eagerly the opportunity to become the owner of it; but as he began the necessary alterations and improvements, and as these became more extensive, his liking for the place so grew upon him that he abandoned the idea of letting it, and in 1860 sold Tavistock House, and transferred his books, pictures, and furniture to Gad's Hill, which thenceforth became his regular family abode, varied only by houses taken from time to time for the London season.

When it came into Dickens's possession the house was exactly the same as he had been familiar with when a boy, and it is described by Mr. Forster as "a plain, old-fashioned, two-story, brick-built country house, with a bell-turret on the roof, and over the front door a quaint neat wooden porch with pillars and seats." Its exterior remained to the last pretty much as he found it, but in all other respects, as the years went on, the aspect of the place was completely changed. Among his additions and alterations, as described by Mr. Forster, were "a new drawing-room built out from the smaller existing one, both being thrown together ultimately ; two good bedrooms built on a third floor at the back ; and such rearrangement of the ground floor as, besides its handsome drawing-room, and its dining-room, which he hung with pictures, transformed its bedroom into a study, which he lined with books and sometimes wrote in, and changed its breakfast-parlor into a retreat fitted up for smokers, into which he put a small billiard-table. These several rooms opened from a hall ; . . . and in this hall, during his last absence in America, a parquet-floor was laid down. Nor did he omit such changes as might increase the comfort of his servants. He built entirely new offices and stables, and replaced a very old coach-house by a capital servants'-hall, transforming the loft above into a commodious school-room or study for his boys. He made at the same time

an excellent croquet-ground out of a waste piece of orchard."

The entrance-hall was decorated with portions of the scenery painted by Stanfield for the "Frozen Deep"; and in a neat frame were the following words, illuminated by Owen Jones:

"This House,

Gad's Hill Place,

Stands on the summit of Shakespeare's Gad's Hill, ever memorable for its association, in his noble fancy, with Sir John Falstaff.

But, my lads, my lads, to-morrow morning, by four o'clock, early at Gadshill! there are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses; I have vizards for you all; you have horses for yourselves."

"Belonging to the house," continues Mr. Forster, "but unfortunately placed on the other side of the high-road, was a shrubbery, well wooded, though in desolate condition, in which stood two magnificent cedars; and having obtained, in 1859, the consent of the local authorities for the necessary underground work, Dickens constructed a passage beneath the road from his front lawn; and in the shrubbery thus rendered accessible, and which he then laid out very prettily, he placed afterward a Swiss chalet presented to him by Mr. Fechter . . . [This chalet] was a great resource in the

summer months, and much of Dickens's work was done there. 'I have put five mirrors in the chalet where I write,' he told an American friend, 'and they reflect and refract, in all kinds of ways, the leaves that are quivering at the windows, and the great fields of waving corn, and the sail-dotted river. My room is up among the branches of the trees; and the birds and the butterflies fly in and out, and the green branches shoot in at the open windows, and the lights and shadows of the clouds come and go with the rest of the company. The scent of the flowers, and indeed of everything that is growing for miles and miles, is most delicious.' He used to make great boast, too, not only of his crowds of singing birds all day, but of his nightingales at night."

Still later, having purchased a much-coveted meadow at the back of the house, of which he had previously had the lease only, he planted it with limes and chestnuts and other quick-growing trees, and thereafter took great pride in his "plantation." The last improvements, made after his second return from America, were a new staircase and parquet-floor in the hall, and a conservatory, built of glass and iron, and opening into both drawing-room and dining-room. "This last addition," says Mr. Forster, "had long been an object of desire with him; though he would hardly even now have given himself the indulgence but for the golden shower from America. He saw it first

in a completed state on the Sunday before his death, when his younger daughter was on a visit to him. 'Well, Katey,' he said to her, 'now you see POSITIVELY the last improvement at Gad's Hill'; and every one laughed at the joke against himself. The success of the new conservatory was unquestionable. It was the remark of all around him that he was certainly, from this last of his improvements, drawing more enjoyment than from any of its predecessors, when the scene forever closed."

The price originally paid by Dickens for the Gad's Hill property was £1,790, but so much had been expended on the improvements and additions that the reserved price put upon it after his death was more than four times as much. It was then bought (for £6,600), and is now inhabited, by his eldest son.

Of the life which Dickens led at Gad's Hill Place after he was fully settled there, a very vivid and pleasant glimpse is afforded by the following passage from the diary of Mr. Franklin Philp, the Washington bookseller, one of his American friends:

"*July 25, 1869.*—Went to Charing Cross Station at 10.40; met Dickens there (by appointment); accompanied Mr. Dickens, his daughter, his sister-in-law, Miss Stone (sister of Marcus Stone, the artist), Charles Kent, editor of the 'Sun,' to Higham, by rail. Gentlemen walked up to Gad's Hill; ladies sent on in carriage. On

arrival (half-past twelve) commenced with 'cider cup,' which had previously been ordered to be ready for us——delicious cooling drink—cider, soda-water, sherry, brandy, lemon-peel, sugar, and ice, flavored with an herb called borage, all judiciously mixed. Lunch at one o'clock, completed by a liqueur which Dickens said was 'peculiar to the house.' From two to half-past five we were engaged in a large open meadow at the back of the house, in the healthful and *intellectual* employment of playing 'Aunt Sally,' and rolling balls on the grass; at half-past three, interval for 'cool brandy and water'; at half-past six o'clock we dined—young Charles Dickens, and a still younger Charles Dickens (making three generations), having arrived in the mean time—dinner faultless, wines irreproachable; nine to ten, billiards; ten to eleven, music in the drawing-room; eleven, 'hot and rebellious liquors' delightfully compounded into punches; twelve, to bed. . . .

"There are magnificent specimens of Newfoundland dogs on the grounds, such animals as Landseer would love to paint. One of them—Bumble—seems to be the favorite with Dickens. They are all named after characters in his works.

"Dickens, at home, seems to be perpetually jolly, and enters into the interest of games with all the ardor of a boy. Physically (as well as mentally) he is immensely strong, having quite regained his wonted health and strength. He is an immense walker, and never seems to be fatigued. He breakfasts at eight o'clock; immediately afterward answers all the letters received that morning; writes until one o'clock; lunches, walks twelve miles (every day), dines at six, and passes the evening entertaining his numerous friends."

It will be observed that no mention is made of *Mrs.* Dickens in the foregoing passage; and long before its date Dickens had separated from his wife under circumstances which we shall now state as briefly as possible.

XIV.

DOMESTIC TROUBLES.

The events to be recorded in this chapter are those which the biographer of Dickens must enter upon with most reluctance; but Dickens himself was at no time very reticent regarding them, and, now that Mrs. Dickens is dead,* there is no sufficient reason why we should imitate Mr. Forster's diplomatic reserve regarding them. At the same time, the subject is not a pleasant one, and we shall confine ourselves to stating the facts, mainly in the shape in which Dickens (and apparently Mrs. Dickens) authorized them to be stated.

It has already been remarked that those who were able to read between the lines of "David Copperfield" found in it much more than a mere record of certain external facts of the author's past life. In truth, the then present state of his mind was reflected only too accurately in that

* She died in 1879.

"vague unhappy loss or want of something" with which Copperfield was so persistently haunted, and in Copperfield's ponderings upon Mrs. Strong's remark that "there can be no disparity in marriage like unsuitability of mind and purpose." Unfortunately, the situation could not be dealt with so successfully in fact as in fiction.

It would be easy to piece together from different sources numerous facts and inferences bearing upon the matter; but the whole difficulty is explained with such painful frankness and lucidity in the letter which we shall quote presently from Dickens to Mr. Arthur Smith (his agent for the public Readings upon which he had now determined), that nothing further need be said than that the step was not taken hastily or in any sudden exasperation of feeling. The restless wanderings to and fro which we have mentioned as characterizing the years from 1852 to 1857 (and many others of less importance which we have not had the space to mention) were nothing less than an attempt on the part of Dickens to escape from a situation which he felt to be intolerable, "to get by some means at some change that should make existence easier." The attempt failed, as such attempts to deal with internal maladies by purely external remedies *must* fail; and, unhappily for Dickens, he possessed no "city of the mind" to which he could turn for consolation and assistance. The surgical treatment

which was at length resorted to appears to have been suggested and desired by Mrs. Dickens herself. Dickens refused for a long time to entertain the suggestion, feeling that that which had been borne so long should be borne to the end; but before committing himself to those exhausting public Readings that had now been decided upon, he felt that his home difficulties must be adjusted, and in May, 1858, he and Mrs. Dickens severed by mutual consent a tie that was never afterward reunited.

With this much of explanation we will now introduce the letter which Dickens wrote to Mr. Arthur Smith, accompanying it with a note in which he said: "You have not only my full permission to show this, but I beg you to show it to any one who wishes to do me right, or to any one who may have been misled into doing me wrong":

"London, W. E., Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, *Tuesday, May* 25, 1858.

"To Arthur Smith, Esq.: Mrs. Dickens and I have lived unhappily together for many years. Hardly any one who has known us intimately can fail to have known that we are, in all respects of character and temperament, wonderfully unsuited to each other. I suppose that no two people, not vicious in themselves, ever were joined together who had a greater difficulty in understanding each other, or who had less in common. An attached woman servant (more friend to both of us than a servant), who lived with us sixteen years, and is now married, and who was and still is in Mrs. Dickens's con-

fidence and mine, who had the closest familiar experience of this unhappiness in London, in the country, in France, in Italy, wherever we have been, year after, month after month, week after week, day after day, will bear testimony to this.

Nothing has, on many occasions, stood between us and a separation but Mrs. Dickens's sister, Georgina Hogarth. From the age of fifteen she has devoted herself to our house and our children. She has been their playmate, nurse, instructress, friend, protectress, adviser, companion. In the manly consideration toward Mrs. Dickens which I owe to my wife, I will only remark of her that the peculiarity of her character has thrown all the children on some one else. I do not know—I can not by any stretch of fancy imagine—what would have become of them but for this aunt, who has grown up with them, to whom they are devoted, and who has sacrificed the best part of her youth and life to them.

"She has remonstrated, reasoned, suffered, and toiled, and come again to prevent a separation between Mrs. Dickens and me. Mrs. Dickens has often expressed to her her sense of her affectionate care and devotion in the house—never more strongly than within the last twelve months.

"For some years past Mrs. Dickens has been in the habit of representing to me that it would be better for her to go away and live apart; that her always increasing estrangement was due to a mental disorder under which she sometimes labors; more, that she felt herself unfit for the life she had to lead, as my wife, and that she would be better far away. I have uniformly replied that she must bear our misfortune, and fight the fight out to the end; that the children were the first consider-

ation; and that I feared they must bind us together in 'appearance.'

"At length, within these three weeks, it was suggested to me by Forster that, even for their sakes, it would be better to reconstruct and rearrange their unhappy home. I empowered him to treat with Mrs. Dickens, as the friend of both of us for one-and-twenty years. Mrs. Dickens wished to add, on her part, Mark Lemon, and did so. On Saturday last Lemon wrote to Forster that Mrs. Dickens 'gratefully and thankfully accepted' the terms I proposed to her. Of the pecuniary part of them, I will only say that I believe they are as generous as if Mrs. Dickens were a lady of distinction, and I a man of fortune. The remaining parts of them are easily described—my eldest boy to live with Mrs. Dickens and to take care of her; my eldest girl to keep my house, both my girls and all my children, but the eldest son, to live with me in the continued companionship of their Aunt Georgina, for whom they have all the tenderest affection that I have ever seen among young people, and who has a higher claim (as I have often declared for many years) upon my affection, respect, and gratitude than anybody in this world.

"I hope that no one who may become acquainted with what I write here can possibly be so cruel and unjust as to put any misconstruction on our separation, so far. My elder children all understand it perfectly, and all accept it as inevitable.

"There is not a shadow of doubt or concealment among us. My eldest son and I are one as to it all.

"Two wicked persons, who should have spoken very differently of me, in consideration of earnest respect and gratitude, have (as I am told, and, indeed, to my person-

al knowledge) coupled with this separation the name of a young lady for whom I have a great attachment and regard. I will not repeat her name—I honor it too much. Upon my soul and honor, there is not on this earth a more virtuous and spotless creature than that young lady. I know her to be innocent and pure, and as good as my own dear daughters.

"Further, I am quite sure that Mrs. Dickens, having received this assurance from me, must now believe it in the respect I know her to have for me, and in the perfect confidence I know her in her better moments to repose in my truthfulness.

"On this head, again, there is not a shadow of doubt or concealment between my children and me. All is open and plain among us, as though we were brothers and sisters. They are perfectly certain that I would not deceive them, and the confidence among us is without a fear. C. D."

Dickens always declared that this was intended as a confidential letter, to be shown only to a few interested persons; but the latitude allowed Mr. Smith was large, and he so interpreted the author's intention that the letter speedily found its way into the newspapers; and, in reply to some comments which it provoked, Dickens was indiscreet enough to publish the following card in "Household Words" (number for June 12, 1858):

"PERSONAL.

"Three-and-twenty years have passed since I entered on my present relations with the public. They began

when I was so young, that I find them to have existed for nearly a quarter of a century.

"Through all that time I have tried to be as faithful to the public as they have been to me. It was my duty never to trifle with them, or deceive them, or presume upon their favor, or do anything with it but work hard to justify it. I have always endeavored to discharge that duty.

"My conspicuous position has often made me the subject of fabulous stories and unaccountable statements. Occasionally such things have chafed me, or even wounded me; but I have always accepted them as the shadows inseparable from the light of my notoriety and success. I have never obtruded any such personal uneasiness of mine upon the generous aggregate of my audience.

"For the first time in my life, and, I believe, for the last, I now deviate from the principle I have so long observed, by presenting myself in my own journal in my own private character, and entreating all my brethren (as they deem that they have reason to think well of me, and to know that I am a man who has ever been unaffectedly true to our common calling) to lend their aid to the dissemination of my present words.

"Some domestic trouble of mine, of long standing, on which I will make no further remark than that it claims to be respected, as being of a sacredly private nature, has lately been brought to an arrangement, which involves no anger or ill-will of any kind, and the whole origin, progress, and surrounding circumstances of which have been, throughout, within the knowledge of my children. It is amicably composed, and its details have now but to be forgotten by those concerned in it.

"By some means, arising out of wickedness, or out of

folly, or out of inconceivable wild chance, or out of all three, this trouble has been made the occasion of misrepresentations, most grossly false, most monstrous, and most cruel—involving, not only me, but innocent persons dear to my heart, and innocent persons of whom I have no knowledge, if, indeed, they have any existence—and so widely spread, that I doubt if one reader in a thousand will peruse these lines, by whom some touch of the breath of these slanderers will not have passed like an unwholesome air.

"Those who know me and my nature need no assurance under my hand that such calumnies are as irreconcilable with me, as they are, in their frantic incoherence, with one another. But there is a great multitude who know me through my writings, and who do not know me otherwise; and I can not bear that one of them should be left in doubt, or hazard of doubt, through my poorly shrinking from taking the unusual means to which I now resort of circulating the truth.

"I most solemnly declare, then—and this I do, both in my own name and in my wife's name—that all the lately whispered rumors touching the trouble at which I have glanced are abominably false. And that whosoever repeats one of them, after this denial, will lie as willfully and as foully as it is possible for any false witness to lie, before heaven and earth.

"CHARLES DICKENS."

The publicity thus given to a private quarrel was certainly bad enough; but unfortunately the matter did not end even here. Dickens resented the failure of his publishers, Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, to insert his card in "Punch," and de-

termined to break off his connection with them. In the November following the publication of his "Personal" statement he summoned a meeting of the proprietors of "Household Words" —he holding five-eighths of the property, and having control over another eighth. A literary friend who represented him at this meeting moved in his behalf a resolution to dissolve the partnership and discontinue the work on May 28, 1859. Dickens having made public announcement of his intention to discontinue the publication of "Household Words," and also advertised its successor, "All the Year Round," Bradbury & Evans had, as they said, "recourse to the Court of Chancery to restrain him from such proceedings, thereby injuring a valuable property in which others besides himself were interested." The Court ordered the concern to be wound up; and the sale accordingly took place on the 16th of May, 1859, when, after a spirited contest, the property was knocked down to Dickens (represented by Mr. Arthur Smith) for £3,550. Messrs. Bradbury & Evans thereupon started "Once a Week" in futile opposition to Dickens's new periodical, which the latter now published on his own account.

The first number of "All the Year Round" was issued on the 30th of April, 1859, a month before the close of its predecessor; and contained the beginning of "A Tale of Two Cities," which

ran until the 26th of November following. This story was followed by "Great Expectations," which began in the number dated 1st December, 1860, and ended on the 3d of August, 1861. Dickens also contributed to "All the Year Round" the series of papers bearing the title of "The Uncommercial Traveler," and the shorter series called "New Uncommercial Samples."

XV.

PUBLIC READINGS.

The earlier steps in that path which, beginning with occasional readings to the small circle of his family and intimate friends, brought Dickens at last face to face with the great public, as the interpreter of his own works, have already been recorded. Like many another author, he was accustomed from the very first to try the effect of what he had created upon a sympathetic and appreciative listener; and many references are made in his earlier letters to the "prodigious" and "uproarious" nature of these effects. For one, who, like Dickens, craved sympathy in his pleasures as well as in his pursuits, the novelty of the excitement thus obtained was sure to possess a peculiar fascination; and from that memorable

evening in December, 1844, when he read the just-completed "Chimes" to a "select few" at Forster's chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the ultimate development of the Readings may be said to have been fixed. Dickens being what he was, the first public readings at Birmingham, though not coming until ten years afterward, were an inevitable result; and the wonderful success achieved by these readings rendered it impossible that they should remain an isolated experiment. As a matter of course, he was immediately overwhelmed with applications for similar assistance elsewhere; and to such demands thus urged Dickens was at all times only too ready to respond. Every year after 1853 witnessed some of those readings for charitable purposes, which we have already mentioned; and these in turn led naturally and logically to the regular professional readings in his own behalf.

It would be a mistake, however, in tracing the pedigree of the public Readings, to confine our attention to the readings that had preceded them. They were the legitimate offspring as well of those amateur theatrical performances which had absorbed so large a share of Dickens's energies during the preceding ten years; and they were themselves, as Mr. Kent has well said, "in all save costume and general *mise en scene*, from first to last essentially and intensely dramatic representations." They were, in truth, plays in

which Dickens not only furnished the drama, but supplied in himself the whole corps of *dramatis personæ;* and furnishing, as they did, an opportune vent for the tastes and love of excitement which the theatrical performances had stimulated, and for the restlessness produced by the unhappy domestic circumstances we have recounted, he flung himself into them, when once the resolution was taken, with even more than his customary energy and vigor.

Almost from the moment when the enormous popularity and success of the charitable readings revealed the possibilities of such an enterprise, Dickens entertained the idea of including them among the regular professional avocations which might be resorted to in the intervals between his more arduous labors as novelist; but Mr. Forster and other friends interposed the objection that any kind of paid public exhibitions of himself would be beneath the dignity of literature. Now, the "dignity of literature" was a subject which always lay very near to Dickens's heart, and though he did not accept their arguments, he so far acquiesced in their conclusion as to refuse all compensation, even for the expenses incurred by him, in giving the charitable readings in different parts of the kingdom. At length the demands upon him in this regard became so incessant and burdensome that he was driven to the necessity, as he himself said, of either giving up the readings

altogether, or of coming to the determination to adopt them as one of his recognized occupations. Just at the time when this conviction had forced itself upon him, the most successful of all the readings (that given in London for the benefit of Douglas Jerrold's family) happened to coincide with an urgent need of ready money for the improvements at Gad's Hill ; and, the mental restlessness of which we have spoken being then also at its height, Dickens determined to act on his own judgment in the matter, and take what he called "the plunge." Summoning to his aid Mr. Arthur Smith, of whose organizing and business ability he had conceived a high opinion, he arranged and announced a series of paid Public Readings to extend over three months, and to include London and the chief provincial cities.

The step thus taken, we may pause to remark, was a most momentous one, and had issues which Dickens himself could hardly have anticipated at the time. His design at the beginning was only to resort to the Readings now and then in the intervals of his regular work as author ; but as a matter of fact they proved so fascinating and exacting that the history of the Readings is in a great measure the history of the remaining years of Dickens's life. When the last one was given, but a few weeks before his death, they had reached the enormous aggregate of 423 altogether.

It was at St. Martin's Hall, London, on the

evening of Thursday, the 29th of April, 1858, that Charles Dickens made his first appearance in his professional character as a public Reader. The piece selected for the occasion was "The Cricket on the Hearth," and the author prefaced it with a brief address, in which he explained to his hearers the relation in which they would thenceforth stand toward each other. He said:

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It may, perhaps, be known to you that, for a few years past, I have been accustomed occasionally to read some of my shorter books to various audiences, in aid of a variety of good objects, and at some charge to myself both in time and money. It having at length become impossible in any reason to comply with these always accumulating demands, I have had definitely to choose between now and then reading on my own account as one of my recognized occupations or not reading at all. I have had little or no difficulty in deciding on the former course.

"The reasons that have led me to it—besides the consideration that it necessitates no departure whatever from the chosen pursuits of my life—are threefold. Firstly, I have satisfied myself that it can involve no compromise of the credit and independence of literature. Secondly, I have long held the opinion that in these times whatever brings a public man and his public face to face, on terms of mutual confidence and respect, is a good thing. Thirdly, I have had a pretty large experience of the interest my hearers are so generous as to take in these occasions, and of the delight they give to me, as a tried means of strengthening these relations, I may almost say of personal friendship, which it is my great privilege and

pride, as it is my great responsibility, to hold with a multitude of persons who will never hear my voice or see my face.

"Thus it is that I come, quite naturally, to be here among you at this time. And thus it is that I proceed to read this little book, quite as composedly as I might proceed to write it, or to publish it in any other way."

An immense audience had assembled for the occasion, and the success was unmistakable and conclusive, not only in its commercial aspect, but as a source of artistic gratification alike to himself and to his hearers. This opening series in London comprised sixteen readings, the first being given as above stated and the last on the 22d of July. Shortly after the completion of the course, Dickens started with Mr. Smith on a great provincial tour, which comprised eighty-seven readings in the principal cities of England, Scotland, and Ireland, the first taking place on the 2d of August, at Clifton, and the last on the 13th of November, at Brighton.

The subjects of the readings on this first circuit were the "Christmas Carol," the "Chimes," the "Trial Scene in Pickwick," the "Story of Little Paul Dombey," "Boots at the Holly Tree Inn," the "Poor Traveller," and "Mrs. Gamp." Of these the most successful then, as in fact they remained to the end, were the Carol, the Pickwick scene, Mrs. Gamp, and Dombey.

The places visited in Scotland on this tour

were Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Aberdeen, and Dundee; those in Ireland comprised Dublin and Belfast, Cork and Limerick. A few extracts from Dickens's letters will suffice to show the nature of the success achieved then and always. Writing to Mr. Forster from London, October 10th, he says:

"As to the truth of the readings, I can not tell you what the demonstrations of personal regard and respect are; how the densest and most uncomfortably-packed crowd will be hushed in an instant when I show my face; how the youth of colleges, and the old men of business in the town, seem equally unable to get near enough to me when they cheer me away at night; how common people and gentlefolks will stop me in the streets and say: 'Mr. Dickens, will you let me touch the hand that has filled my home with so many friends?' And if you saw the mothers, and fathers, and sisters, and brothers in mourning, who invariably come to 'Little Dombey,' and if you studied the wonderful expression of comfort and reliance with which they hang about me, as if I had been with them, all kindness and delicacy, at their own little death-bed, you would think it one of the strangest things in the world.

"As to the mere effect, of course I don't go on doing the thing so often without carefully observing myself and the people too in every little thing, and without (in consequence) greatly improving in it.

"At Aberdeen we were crammed to the street twice in one day. At Perth (where I thought, when I arrived, there literally could be nobody to come) the nobility came posting in from thirty miles round, and the whole

town came, and filled an immense hall. As to the effect, if you had seen them after Lilian died, in 'The Chimes,' or when Scrooge woke and talked to the boy outside the window, I doubt if you would ever have forgotten it. And at the end of 'Dombey,' yesterday afternoon, in the cold light of day, they all got up, after a short pause, gentle and simple, and thundered and waved their hats with that astonishing heartiness and fondness for me, that for the first time in all my public career they took me completely off my legs, and I saw the whole eighteen hundred of them reel on one side as if a shock from without had shaken the hall."

(*To Miss Dickens, from Plymouth, August 7th.*)—"The closing night at Plymouth was a very great scene, and the morning there was exceedingly good too. You will be glad to hear that at Clifton last night a torrent of five hundred shillings bore Arthur away, pounded him against the wall, flowed on to the seats over his body, scratched him, and damaged his best dress suit. All to his unspeakable joy."

(*To Miss Dickens, from Belfast, August 28th.*)—"When I went down to the Rotunda at Dublin on Thursday night, I said to Arthur, who came rushing at me, 'You needn't tell me. I know all about it.' The moment I had come out of the door of the hotel (a mile off) I had come against the stream of people turned away. I had struggled against it to the room. There the crowd in all the lobbies and passages was so great that I had difficulty in getting in. They had broken all the glass in the pay-boxes. They had offered frantic prices for stalls. Eleven bank-notes were thrust into that pay-box (Arthur saw them) at one time for eleven stalls. Our men were flattened against walls and squeezed

against beams. Ladies stood all night with their chins against my platform. Other ladies sat all night upon my steps. You never saw such a sight. And the reading went tremendously! It is much to be regretted that we troubled ourselves to go anywhere else in Ireland. We turned away people enough to make immense houses for a week.

"We arrived here yesterday at two. The room will not hold more than from eighty to ninety pounds. The same scene was repeated, with the additional feature that the people are much rougher here than in Dublin, and that there was a very great uproar at the opening of the doors, which, the police in attendance being quite inefficient and only looking on, it was impossible to check. Arthur was in the deepest misery because shillings got into stalls, and half-crowns got into shillings, and stalls got nowhere, and there was immense confusion. It ceased, however, the moment I showed myself; and all went most brilliantly in spite of a great piece of the cornice of the ceiling falling with a great crash within four or five inches of the head of a young lady on my platform (I was obliged to have people there), and in spite of my gas suddenly going out at the time of the game of forfeits at Scrooge's nephew's, through some Belfastian gentleman accidentally treading on the flexible pipe, and needing to be relighted."

(*To Miss Hogarth, from Dublin, August 29th.*)—"The success at Belfast has been equal to the success here. Enormous! We turned away half the town. I think them a better audience, on the whole, than Dublin; and the personal affection there was something overwhelming. I wish you and the dear girls could have seen the people look at me in the street; or heard them

ask me, as I hurried to the hotel after reading last night, to 'do me the honor to shake hands, Misther Dickens, and God bless you, sir; not ounly for the light you've been to me this night, but for the light you've been in mee house, sir (and God love your face), this many a year.' Every night, by-the-bye, since I have been in Ireland, the ladies have beguiled John out of the bouquet from my coat. And yesterday morning, as I had showered the leaves from my geranium in reading 'Little Dombey,' they mounted the platform, after I was gone, and picked them all up as keepsakes! I have never seen *men* go in to cry so undisguisedly as they did at that reading yesterday afternoon. They made no attempt to hide it, and certainly cried more than the women. As to the 'Boots' at night, and 'Mrs. Gamp' too, it was just one roar with me and them; for they made me laugh so that sometimes I *could not* compose my face to go on."

(*To Miss Hogarth, from Scarborough, September 11th.*)—"Apropos of children, there was one gentleman at the 'Little Dombey' yesterday morning who exhibited, or rather concealed, the profoundest grief. After crying a good deal without holding it, he covered his face with both his hands, and laid it down on the back of the seat before him, and really shook with emotion. He was not in mourning, but I supposed him to have lost some child in old time. There was a remarkably good fellow of thirty or so, too, who found something so very ludicrous in 'Toots,' that he *could not* compose himself at all, but laughed until he sat wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. And when he felt 'Toots' coming again, he began to laugh and wipe his eyes afresh, and when he came, he gave a kind of cry, as if it were too much for him. It was uncommonly droll, and made me laugh heartily."

(*To Miss Dickens, from Leeds, September 15th.*)—"Arthur told you, I suppose, that he had his shirt-front and waistcoat torn off last night? He was perfectly enraptured in consequence. Our men got so knocked about that he gave them five shillings apiece on the spot. John passed several minutes upside down against the wall, with his head among the people's boots. He came out of the difficulty in an exceedingly tousled condition, and with his face much flushed. For all this, and their being packed as you may conceive they would be packed, they settled down the instant I went in, and never wavered in the closest attention for an instant. It was a very high room, and required a great effort."

Immediately after the close of the provincial tour, it was announced that three Christmas readings would be given in London, at St. Martin's Hall. These came off accordingly on December 24 and 27, 1858, and January 6, 1859; and so many applicants failed to obtain admission that three supplementary readings were given on the evenings of the 13th, 20th, and 28th of January. After these, there was an interval of over two years and a half, during the greater part of which "Great Expectations" was appearing from week to week in "All the Year Round"—it being a judicious rule with Dickens never to engage in any other work while one of his serial stories was being produced. "Great Expectations" was completed on the 3d of August, 1861, and arrangements were entered upon almost at once for another series of readings in London and elsewhere,

Mr. Headland having become Dickens's business manager on the death of Mr. Arthur Smith, which occurred at this time. The second tour began on the 28th of October, 1861, at Norwich, included all the principal towns and cities not visited during the previous tour, and ended on the 30th of January, 1862, at Chester, forty-seven readings having been given, in all. London's turn came then, and a series of ten readings was given in St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, beginning on the 13th of March and ending on the 27th of June.

At the close of October in this year, Dickens, accompanied by his daughter and sister-in-law, went to reside for a couple of months in Paris ; and while there he promised to give a couple of readings at the British Embassy, for the benefit of the British Charitable Fund in that capital. In fulfillment of this promise, he went to Paris early in January, 1863, and the two readings were so brilliantly successful that, by particular desire, they were, a little time afterward, supplemented by a third, which was quite as numerously attended as its predecessors had been. He remained in Paris until February, and, then returning to London, began on March 2d a series of thirteen readings at the Hanover Square Rooms, which continued until June 13th.

Then followed another interval of nearly three years, during which Dickens wrote the last of his

longer novels, "Our Mutual Friend," which was published in twenty monthly numbers between May, 1864, and November, 1865. Toward the end of May in this latter year, being out of health, and much overworked, Dickens took a short holiday trip into France; and on his way home, on the fatal 9th of June, he was in that frightful railway accident at Staplehurst, from the effects of which his nerves never wholly recovered, though at the time he congratulated himself upon being unhurt. The shocking scenes which he witnessed in that disaster made an impression upon him, the nature of which he could not fully realize; but the practical result was that he never afterward regained his accustomed physical vigor.

All during the summer of 1865 he was ailing and feeble. Nevertheless, on receiving in the autumn from the Messrs. Chappell, who were skilled in the organizing of public entertainments, overtures for another series of readings, on very liberal terms (£50 a night besides expenses), he entered at once into an engagement for thirty nights. The Messrs. Chappell assumed all the risk and all the business arrangements; and with Mr. Dolby as their agent and his own Dickens made all his subsequent reading tours.

This third series of readings began at St. James's Hall, London, on the 10th of April, 1866, and ended there on the 12th of June, the principal cities of the United Kingdom having been visited

in the mean while. His letters show that the wear and tear of the incessant railroad traveling during this period told heavily upon Dickens; but the desire to make an adequate provision for his large family had now become uppermost in his thoughts, and he seemed to care nothing for the physical labor which it involved. Half a year after the close of the third series, he entered into another engagement with Messrs. Chappell for a fourth series of fifty nights (at £60 a night); which was fulfilled between the 15th of January and the 13th of May, 1867, with a success that far surpassed even the previous successes of a similar kind.

The fame of the readings had speedily reached America, of course, and his first provincial tour had hardly begun when Dickens began to be importuned by speculators and entreated by his American friends to pay us a second visit in his professional capacity. For a long time he held out in his refusal to extend his travels so far; but in the summer of 1867 the assurances as to the enormous monetary harvest he might expect to reap overcame his resolution, and he sent over Mr. Dolby to prepare the field.

The American tour, however, deserves a chapter by itself, and the present chapter would be incomplete without some reference to the manner in which Dickens acquitted himself of his task as a Reader.

It was naturally inferred from the announcement that Dickens was to read from his own works—that he would simply select certain pieces or chapters, and read them off in their original form; and people who did not understand his method were often puzzled at the apparent liberties which he took with the well-known text. The fact is, however, that he bestowed precisely the same minute and painstaking care upon the preparation of his readings that he had already bestowed upon the writings on which they were based. "Virtually," says Mr. Kent, "the fragmentary portions thus taken from his larger works were rewritten by him, with countless elisions and eliminations after having been selected. Reprinted in their new shape, each as 'A Reading,' they were then touched and retouched by the author, pen in hand, until, at the end of a long succession of revisions, the pages came to be cobwebbed over with a wonderfully intricate network of blots and lines in the way of correction or of obliteration. Several of the leaves in this way, what with the black letter-press on the white paper, being scored out or interwoven with a tracery in red ink and blue ink alternately, present to view a curiously parti-colored or tesselated appearance."

Great, moreover, as were the thought and care lavished upon the composition of the readings, even more, perhaps, were bestowed upon the man-

ner of their delivery; and those tones and expressions and attitudes which were apparently the natural and unpremeditated accompaniments of the words, were in truth the result of a scarcely credible amount of study and practice. In illustration and confirmation of this, Mr. Kent relates an anecdote of a purely experimental reading of "Doctor Marigold," which came off privately at Dickens's residence on the evening of March 18, 1866, before a small circle which, besides his family, comprised Robert Browning, Wilkie Collins, John Forster, Charles Fechter, and Mr. Kent. Even in private Dickens had never read "Doctor Marigold" until that evening; and the auditors were naturally surprised at hearing a reading as finished and effective and forcible as any he had ever given. "Everything was explained, however," says Mr. Kent, "by a half-whispered remark, made to the present writer in passing, by the novelist—made by him half wearedly, yet half laughingly: '*There! if I have gone through that already to myself once, I have gone through it two—hundred—times!*'"

So constant and tireless was he in perfecting his renditions that it may be truly said that the same piece was never read twice exactly alike. Incessantly watching himself and his audiences, every possible improvement that suggested itself was carefully noted; and, in that sense, he was always engaged in studying his parts. When his

third series of readings had been arranged for, feeling that his attention could be better utilized than in concentrating it upon the book, he actually committed to memory the entire series of readings!

Nor did the pains which he took to insure entire success end even here. "Announced to read, for instance, for the first time in some town he had never visited for that purpose, or in some building in which his voice had never before been raised, he would go down to the empty hall long before the hour appointed for the reading, to take the bearings, as he would say, or, in other words, to familiarize himself with the place beforehand." And, in addition to all this, he made it an invariable rule to read carefully over in the afternoon whatever pieces he was to read in the evening.

The hold which his Readings took upon Dickens was gradual. They began, as we have seen, as a charity and as an amusement. But his temperament was sure to turn any artistic amusement into a labor—into struggle for excellence. The two hours' reading, which at first was little more than highly animated and picturesque elocution, got gradually built up into a difficult and complicated part; each line and look and posture laboriously yet lovingly studied; and the whole constituting an ingenious and highly elaborated histrionic performance.

XVI.

SECOND VISIT TO AMERICA.

It has already been mentioned that from the very beginning of his professional readings Dickens had been overwhelmed with offers and entreaties to give a series of readings in the United States. Though declined at the time, the offers were constantly renewed, and, though Dickens really dreaded the idea of extending his travels so far, his resolution was at length shaken. Immediately following the completion of his fourth series of readings came an offer from Mr. James T. Fields and other American friends to deposit ten thousand pounds in a London bank as a guarantee fund; and, without committing himself even then, Dickens yielded so far as to send over Mr. Dolby as his agent to make a personal inspection of the proposed field of operations. Mr. Dolby's report was so very favorable that, immediately upon his return, Dickens drew up a brief statement of the reasons for and against the visit, which he entitled "The Case in a Nutshell," and from which it appeared that he might reckon upon a net profit on eighty readings, after the payment of all expenses, of fifteen thousand five hundred pounds. It was evident from the tenor of this statement that Dickens had already made up his mind to come, and, having further deter-

mined to make the experiment on his own account, he employed Mr. Dolby as his business manager, and again dispatched him across the Atlantic to arrange all the details in advance of his own arrival.

This was in October, 1867, and Dickens had fixed upon the 9th of November as the date of his departure from England. In the interval, on the 2d of November, a great farewell banquet was given in his honor at Freemasons' Hall, with Lord Lytton in the chair; and, in the speech which he made on that occasion, Dickens gave eloquent expression to the feelings with which he was embarking upon his second visit to America:

"Since I was there before," he said, "a vast, entirely new generation has arisen in the United States. Since I was there before, most of the best known of my books have been written and published. The new generation and the books have come together and have kept together, until at last numbers of those who have so widely and constantly read me, naturally desiring a little variety in the relations between us, have expressed a strong wish that I should read myself. This wish at last conveyed to me, through public channels and business channels, has gradually become enforced by an immense accumulation of letters from individuals and associations of individuals, all expressing in the same hearty, homely, cordial, unaffected way a kind of personal interest in me—I had almost said a kind of personal affection for me, which, I am sure you will agree with me, it would be dull insensibility on my part not to prize." Hence,

as he further explained, his setting forth on that day week upon his second visit to America, with a view, among other purposes, "to lay down a third cable of intercommunication and alliance between the Old World and the New."

He landed at Boston on November 19th, and any lingering apprehensions he may have had were at once dispelled by the extreme warmth and cordiality of his reception. "Up to the last moment," says Mr. Forster, "he had not been able to clear off wholly a shade of misgiving that some of the old grudges might make themselves felt; but from the instant of his setting foot in Boston not a vestige of such fear remained. The greeting was to the full as extraordinary as that of twenty-five years before, and was given now, as then, to the man who had made himself the most popular writer in the country."

The American readings, as originally planned, were intended to number eighty-four altogether. They actually numbered seventy-six, and might have numbered twice as many more without impairing in any degree the popular enthusiasm with which they were received. They were initiated by the first of the Boston readings on Monday, the 2d of December, 1867; and, extending over an interval of less than five months, they closed at Steinway Hall, New York, on Monday, the 20th of April, 1868. In the mean time, besides New York and Boston, the tour had in-

cluded Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, New Haven, Springfield, Worcester, New Bedford, Providence, and Portland. It had been intended to include the chief cities of the West and two or three in Canada, but these were dropped from the list owing to the severity of the winter travel. It may be added here that the pecuniary results of the readings far surpassed the most sanguine anticipations. The gross receipts were upward of $200,000, and the net profit, after all expenses of every kind had been deducted, was not less than $140,000.

A few extracts from the letters which Dickens wrote home to his family and friends will convey a more vivid impression than could otherwise be obtained of the characteristic features and incidents of these memorable readings :

(*To Miss Dickens, from Parker House, Boston, November 21, 1867.*)—"I arrived here on Tuesday night, after a very slow passage from Halifax against headwinds. All the tickets for the first four readings here (all yet announced) were sold immediately on their being issued. You know that I begin on the 2d of December with 'Carol' and 'Trial'? Shall be heartily glad to begin to count the readings off.

"This is an immense hotel, with all manner of white marble public passages and public rooms. I live in a corner high up, and have a hot and cold bath in my bedroom (communicating with the sitting-room), and comforts not in existence when I was here before. The cost

of living is enormous, but happily we can afford it. I dine to-day with Longfellow, Emerson, Holmes, and Agassiz. Longfellow was here yesterday. Perfectly white in hair and beard, but a remarkably handsome and notable-looking man. The city has increased enormously in five-and-twenty years. It has grown more mercantile—is like Leeds mixed with Preston, and flavored with New Brighton; but for smoke and fog you substitute an exquisitely bright light air. I found my rooms beautifully decorated (by Mrs. Fields) with choice flowers, and set off by a number of good books. I am not much persecuted by people in general, as Dolby has happily made up his mind that the less I am exhibited for nothing the better. So our men sit outside the room door and wrestle with mankind."

(*To the same, December 1st.*)—"The leading New York papers have sent men over for to-morrow night with instructions to telegraph columns of descriptions. Great excitement and expectation everywhere. Fields says he has looked forward to it so long that he knows he will die at five minutes to eight. At the New York barriers, where the tickets are on sale and the people ranged as at the Paris theatres, speculators went up and down offering 'twenty dollars for anybody's place.' The money was in no case accepted. One man sold two tickets for the second, third, and fourth night for 'one ticket for the first, fifty dollars' (about seven pounds ten shillings), 'and a brandy cocktail,' which is an iced bitter drink. The weather has been rather muggy and languid until yesterday, when there was the coldest wind blowing that I ever felt. In the night it froze very hard, and to-day the sky is beautiful."

(*To Mr. Forster, from Boston, December 3d.*)—"It is

really impossible to exaggerate the magnificence of the reception or the effect of the reading. The whole city will talk of nothing else and hear of nothing else to-day. Every ticket for those announced here and in New York is sold. All are sold at the highest price, for which in our calculation we made no allowance; and it is impossible to keep out speculators who immediately sell at a premium. At the decreased rate of money even, we had above £450 English in the house last night; and the New York hall holds five hundred people more. Everything looks brilliant beyond the most sanguine hopes, and I was quite as cool last night as though I were reading at Chatham."

(*To Miss Dickens, from New York, December 11th.*)—"Amazing success here. A very fine audience; *far better than that at Boston.* Great reception. Great, 'Carol' and 'Trial,' on the first night; still greater, 'Copperfield' and 'Bob,' on the second. Dolby sends you a few papers by this post. You will see from their tone what a success it is.

"I can not pay this letter, because I give it at the latest moment to the mail-officer, who is going on board the Cunard packet in charge of the mails, and who is staying in this house. We are now selling (at the hall) the tickets for the four readings of next week. At nine o'clock this morning there were two thousand people in waiting, and they had begun to assemble in the bitter cold as early as two o'clock. All night long Dolby and our man have been stamping tickets. (Immediately over my head, by-the-bye, and keeping me awake.). . . . I keep a very smart carriage and pair; and if you were to behold me driving out, furred up to the mustache, with furs on the coachboy and on the driver, and with an im-

mense white-, red-, and yellow-striped rug for a covering, you would suppose me to be of Hungarian or Polish nationality. . . .

"Dolby sends his kindest regards. He is just come in from our ticket sales, and has put such an immense untidy heap of paper money on the table that it looks like a family wash. He hardly ever dines, and is always tearing about at unreasonable hours. He works very hard."

(*To Miss Hogarth, from Boston, December 22d.*) — "When we got here last Saturday night we found that Mrs. Fields had not only garnished the rooms with flowers, but also with holly (with real red berries) and festoons of moss dependent from the looking-glasses and picture-frames. She is one of the dearest little women in the world. The homely Christmas look of the place quite affected us. Yesterday we dined at her house, and there was a plum-pudding brought on blazing, and not to be surpassed in any house in England. There is a certain Captain Dolliver, belonging to the Boston Custom-house, who came off in the little steamer that brought me ashore from the Cuba. He took it into his head that he would have a piece of English mistletoe brought out in this week's Cunard, which should be laid upon my breakfast-table. And there it was this morning. In such affectionate touches as this, these New England people are especially amiable. . . . By-the-bye, when we left New York for this place, Dolby called my amazed attention to the circumstance that Scott was leaning his head against the side of the carriage and weeping bitterly. I asked him what was the matter, and he replied: 'The owdacious treatment of the luggage, which was more outrageous than a man could bear.' I told him not to

make a fool of himself; but they do knock it about cruelly. I think every trunk we have is already broken."

(*To the same, from New York, January 3d, 1868.*)—"To-night I read out the first quarter of my list. Our houses have been very fine here, but have never quite recovered the Dolby uproar. It seems impossible to devise any scheme for getting the tickets into the people's hands without the intervention of speculators. The people *will not* help themselves; and, of course, the speculators and all other such prowlers throw as great obstacles in Dolby's way (an Englishman's) as they possibly can. He may be a little injudicious into the bargain. Last night, for instance, he met one of the 'ushers' (who show people to their seats) coming in with Kelly. It is against orders that any one employed in front should go out during the readings, and he took this man to task in the British manner. Instantly the free and independent usher put on his hat and walked off. Seeing which, all the other free and independent ushers (some twenty in number) put on *their* hats and walked off, leaving us absolutely devoid and destitute of a staff to-night. One has since been improvised; but it was a small matter to raise a stir and ill-will about, especially as one of our men was equally in fault."

(*To the same, from Boston, January 4th.*)—"I write to you by this opportunity, though I really have nothing to tell you. The work is hard and the climate is hard. We made a tremendous hit last night with 'Nickleby' and 'Boots,' which the Bostonians certainly, on the whole, appreciate more than 'Copperfield.' Dolby is always going about with an immense bundle that looks like a sofa-cushion, but it is in reality paper money, and always works like a Trojan. His business at night is a mere no-

thing, for these people are so accustomed to take care of themselves that one of these immense audiences will fall into their places with an ease amazing to a frequenter of St. James's Hall. And the certainty with which they are all in, before I go on, is a very acceptable mark of respect. I must add, too, that although there is a conventional familiarity in the use of one's name in the newspapers as 'Dickens,' 'Charlie,' and what not, I do not in the least see that familiarity in the writers themselves. An inscrutable tone obtains in journalism, which a stranger can not understand. If I say in common courtesy to one of them, whom Dolby introduces, 'I am much obliged to you for your interest in me,' or so forth, he seems quite shocked, and has a bearing of perfect modesty and propriety."

(*To the same, from New York, January 12th.*)—"On Wednesday I came back here for my four church readings at Brooklyn. Each evening an enormous ferryboat will convey me and my state carriage (not to mention half a dozen wagons, and any number of people, and a few score of horses) across the river, and will bring me back again. The sale of tickets there was an amazing scene. The noble army of speculators are now furnished (this is literally true, and I am quite serious), each man with a straw mattress, a little bag of bread and meat, two blankets, and a bottle of whisky. With this outfit *they lie down in line on the pavement* the whole night before the tickets are sold, generally taking up their position at about ten. It being severely cold at Brooklyn, they made an immense bonfire in the street—a narrow street of wooden houses!—which the police turned out to extinguish. A general fight then took place, out of which the people farthest off in the line rushed bleeding when they

saw a chance of displacing others near the door, and put their mattresses in those places, and then held on by the iron rails. At eight in the morning Dolby appeared with the tickets in a portmanteau. He was immediately saluted with a roar of 'Halloa, Dolby! So Charley let you have the carriage, has he, Dolby? How is he, Dolby? Don't drop the tickets, Dolby! Look alive, Dolby!' etc., etc., etc., in the midst of which he proceeded to business, and concluded (as usual) by giving universal satisfaction."

(*To Miss Dickens, from Washington, February 4th.*) —"I dined (against my rules) with Charles Sumner on Sunday, he having been an old friend of mine. Mr. Secretary Stanton (War Minister) was there. He is a man of a very remarkable memory, and famous for his acquaintance with the minutest details of my books. Give him any passage anywhere, and he will instantly cap it and go on with the context. He was commander-in-chief of all the Northern forces concentrated here, and never went to sleep at night without first reading something from my books, which were always with him. I put him through a pretty severe examination, but he was better up than I was.

"The gas was very defective last night, and I began with a small speech, to the effect that I must trust to the brightness of their faces for the illumination of mine; this was taken greatly. In the 'Carol,' a most ridiculous incident occurred all of a sudden. I saw a dog look out from among the seats into the center aisle, and look very intently at me. The general attention being fixed on me, I don't think anybody saw the dog; but I felt so sure of his turning up again and barking that I kept my eye wandering about in search of him. He was a very

comic dog, and it was well for me that I was reading a very comic part of the book. But when he bounced out into the center aisle again, in an entirely new place (still looking intently at me), and tried the effect of a bark upon my proceedings, I was seized with such a paroxysm of laughter that it communicated itself to the audience, and we roared at one another loud and long."

(*To Miss Hogarth, from Washington, February 7th.*) —"The papers here having given out about this being my birthday, the most exquisite flowers came pouring in at breakfast time from all sorts of people. The room is covered with them, made up into beautiful bouquets, and arranged in all manner of green baskets. Probably I shall find plenty more at the hall to-night. . . . I mentioned the dog on the first night here. Next night I thought I heard (in 'Copperfield') a suddenly suppressed bark. It happened in this wise: Osgood, standing just within the door, felt his leg touched, and, looking down, beheld the dog staring intently at me, and evidently just about to bark. In a transport of presence of mind and fury, he instantly caught him up in both hands and threw him over his own head out into the entry, where the check-takers received him like a game at ball. Last night he came again *with another dog;* but our people were so sharply on the lookout for him that he didn't get in. He had evidently promised to pass the other dog free."

(*To Mr. Fechter, from Syracuse, March 8th.*)—"I have had an American cold (the worst in the world) since Christmas Day. I read four times a week, with the most tremendous energy I can bring to bear upon it. I travel about pretty heavily. I am very resolute about calling on people, or receiving people, or dining out, and so save myself a great deal. I read in all sorts of places

—churches, theatres, concert-rooms, lecture-halls. Every night I read I am described (mostly by people who have not the faintest notion of observing) from the sole of my boot to where the topmost hair of my head ought to be, but is not. Sometimes I am described as being 'evidently nervous'; sometimes it is rather taken ill that 'Mr. Dickens is so extraordinarily composed.' My eyes are blue, red, gray, white, green, brown, black, hazel, violet, and rainbow-colored. I am like a 'well-to-do American gentleman,' and the Emperor of the French, with an occasional touch of the Emperor of China, and a deterioration from the attributes of our famous townsman, Rufus W. B. D. Dodge Grumsher Pickville. I say all sorts of things that I never said, go to all sorts of places that I never saw or heard of, and have done all manner of things (in some previous state of existence, I suppose) that have quite escaped my memory. You ask your friend to describe what he is about. This is what he is about, every day and hour of his American life."

Every letter shows that the success and enthusiasm which awaited him everywhere were very exhilarating to Dickens; but there was a reverse side to it all, to which he gave less attention than he ought. Even before he left England there had been unmistakable symptoms of a break-down in health; and the severe weather of an exceptionally severe American winter told heavily upon his weakened constitution. One of the earliest letters from New York referred to what he facetiously called "a true American catarrh," which he had caught, and which never again left him

until he had quitted the country. Several times he was on the verge of giving up, and quite often it seemed that particular readings *must* be postponed; but his great strength of will always carried him through, and every one of his engagements was fulfilled with the regularity of clockwork. This was not done, however, without greater drafts upon his strength than were at all prudent or reasonable; and the entire period of his American visit was a period of rapidly declining health. "I have coughed every morning," he says, in one of his letters, "from two or three till five or six, and have been absolutely sleepless. I have no appetite, besides, and no taste. Last night here, I took some laudanum; and it is the only thing that has done me good, though it made me sick this morning." And here is an account of his mode of living during the last ten weeks of his stay: "I can not eat (to anything like the necessary extent) and have established this system: at seven in the morning, in bed, a tumbler of new cream and two tablespoonfuls of rum. At twelve, a sherry cobbler and a biscuit. At three (dinner time) a pint of Champagne. At five minutes to eight an egg beaten up with a glass of sherry. Between the parts, the strongest beef tea that can be made, drunk hot. At a quarter past ten, soup, and any little thing to drink that I can fancy. I do not eat more than half a pound of solid food in the whole four-and-twenty hours, if so much." Still,

he not only managed to fulfill all his reading engagements, as we have said, but to keep pace with Messrs. Dolby and Osgood in a walking-match between these two gentlemen on February 29th, near Boston; and to preside at a most *recherche* little dinner which he himself gave in honor of the occasion.

In reading Dickens's account of his second American visit one naturally looks for passages to place over against those curiously frank expressions of his antipathies and resentments which characterized his earlier visit; but years had brought discretion to the author, even if they had not changed his opinions, and, now that his monetary interests were directly involved, he felt a nervous dread of having anything said or done that might impair the good understanding between himself and his audiences. On the whole, it is evident that Dickens never really lost his old feeling of dislike toward America and Americans; but he frankly admitted that there had been great advances in other things besides material wealth. In a letter to Mr. Macready, he wrote: "You would find the general aspect of America and Americans decidedly much improved. You would find immeasurably greater consideration and respect for your privacy than of old. You would find a steady change for the better everywhere, except (oddly enough) in the railroads generally, which seem to have stood still, while everything

else has moved." In another letter he says: "I find the people lighter and more humorous than formerly; and there must be a great deal of innocent imagination among every class, or they never could pet with such extraordinary pleasure as they do the Boots's story of the elopement of the two little children. They seem to see the children; and the women set up a shrill undercurrent of half-pity and half-pleasure that is quite affecting." But the most distinct attempt at reparation was made in the speech which he delivered at a Press Banquet given to him at Delmonico's, in New York, on the 18th of April, 1868. In the course of this speech, among many other graceful and cordial things, he said:

"Gentlemen, so much of my voice has lately been heard in the land, and I have for upward of four hard winter months so contended against what I have been sometimes quite admiringly assured was a genuine American catarrh — a possession which I have throughout highly appreciated, though I might have preferred to be naturalized by any other outward or visible means—I say, gentlemen, so much of my voice has lately been heard in the land that I might have been contented not to trouble you any further from my present standing-point, were it not a duty with which I henceforth charge myself, not only here, but on every suitable occasion whatsoever and wheresoever, to express my high and grateful sense of my second reception in America, and to bear my honest testimony to the national generosity and magnanimity. Also, to declare how astounded I have

been by the amazing changes that I have seen around me on every side. Changes moral, changes physical; changes in the amount of land subdued and cultivated; changes in the rise of vast new cities; changes in the growth of older cities almost out of recognition; changes in the growth of the graces and amenities of life; changes in the press—without whose advancement no advancement can take place anywhere. Nor am I, believe me, so arrogant as to suppose that in five-and-twenty years there have been no changes in me, and that I had nothing to learn and no extreme expressions to correct when I was here first. And, gentlemen, this brings me to a point on which I have, ever since I landed here last November, observed a strict silence, though sometimes tempted to break it; and, in reference to it, I will, with your good leave, take you into my confidence now. Even the press, being human, may sometimes be mistaken or misinformed; and I rather think that I have, in one or two rare instances, known its information to be not perfectly correct with reference to myself. Indeed, I have now and again been more surprised by printed news that I have read of myself than by any printed news that I have ever read in my present state of existence. Thus, the vigor and perseverance with which I have for some months been 'collecting materials for and hammering away at a new book on America' has astonished me—seeing that all that time my declaration has been perfectly well known to my publishers on both sides of the Atlantic, that no consideration on earth would induce me to write one. But what I have intended, what I have resolved upon—and this is the confidence I seek to place in you—is, on my return to England, in my own person, in my own journal, manfully,

promptly, plainly, to bear for the behoof of my countrymen such testimony to the gigantic changes in this country as I have hinted at to-night. Also to record that wherever I have been, in the smallest places equally with the largest, I have been received with unsurpassable politeness, delicacy, sweet temper, hospitality, consideration, and with unsurpassable respect for the privacy daily enforced upon me by the nature of my avocation here and the state of my health. This testimony, so long as I live, and so long as my descendants have any legal right in my books, I shall cause to be republished as an appendix to every copy of those two books of mine in which I have referred to America. And this I will do, and cause to be done, not in mere love and thankfulness, but because I regard it as an act of plain justice and honor."

This banquet took place on Saturday, and on the following Monday Dickens gave his farewell reading in America, at Steinway Hall. Two days later, on the 22d of April, he sailed for England in the "Russia."

XVII.

LAST YEARS.

In the very first letter that Dickens wrote to his Boston friends after his arrival in England, he announced that he was already settling the de-

tails of his farewell course of readings. Indeed, the scheme had been broached before he started for America, and the Chappells had sent a letter after him, offering to assume all expenses of every kind, and to pay him in addition £6,000 for a series of seventy-five readings. Before the return from America the terms were raised and settled; the number of readings was increased to one hundred, and the payment to £8,000 over and above all expenses.

"Such a temptation," says Mr. Forster, "undoubtedly was great; and, though it was a fatal mistake which Dickens committed in yielding to it, it was not an ignoble one. He did it under no excitement from the American gains, of which he knew nothing when he pledged himself to the enterprise. No man could care essentially less for mere money than he did. But the necessary provision for many sons was a constant anxiety; he was proud of what the Readings had done to abridge this care; and the very strain of them under which it seems certain that his health had first given way, and which he always steadily refused to connect especially with them, had also broken the old confidence of being at all times available for his higher pursuit. What affected his health only he would not regard as part of the question either way. That was to be borne as the lot more or less of all men; and the more thorough he could make his feeling of independence,

and of ability to rest, by what was now in hand, the better his final chances of a perfect recovery would be. That was the spirit in which he entered on this last engagement. It was an opportunity offered for making a particular work really complete before he should abandon it for ever."

The series was to begin the first week in October, and the intervening summer, spent in entertaining American friends, and in editorial work on "All the Year Round," was a period of declining vigor. Writing to M. de Cerjat on August 26th, he said: "The great subject in England for the moment is the horrible accident to the Irish mail-train. . . . My escape in the Staplehurst accident of three years ago is not to be obliterated from my nervous system. To this hour I have sudden vague rushes of terror, even when riding in a hansom cab, which are perfectly unreasonable but quite insurmountable. I used to make nothing of driving a pair of horses habitually through the most crowded parts of London. I can not now drive, with comfort to myself, on the country roads here; and I doubt if I could ride at all in the saddle. My reading secretary and companion knows so well when one of these odd momentary seizures comes upon me in a railway-carriage that he instantly produces a dram of brandy, which rallies the blood to the head, and generally prevails." And Mr. Forster says: "I saw him frequently that summer, and never

without the impression that America had told heavily upon him. There was manifest abatement of his natural force, the elasticity of bearing was impaired, and the wonderful brightness of his eye was dimmed at times. One day, too, as he walked from his office with Miss Hogarth to dine at our house, he could read only the halves of the letters over the shop doors that were on his right as he looked. He attributed it to medicine. It was an additional unfavorable symptom that his right foot had become affected as well as the left, though not to anything like the same extent, during the journey from the Canada frontier to Boston. But all this disappeared, upon any special cause for exertion, and he was never unprepared to lavish freely for others the reserved strength that should have been kept for himself. This, indeed, was the great danger, for it dulled the apprehension of us all to the fact that absolute and pressing danger did positively exist."

In spite of these warnings, which, as can easily be seen now, should have acted as deterrents, Dickens began his Farewell Readings on the 6th of October. The audiences were as large and as enthusiastic as ever; but, feeling that he ought to provide some novelty in going over the oft-traversed ground, he made a reading from the murder in "Oliver Twist," which, however, proved so horrible that he concluded not to read

it in public until he had first tried its effect in private. The trial came off on the evening of November 18th, at St. James's Hall, London, and was so eminently successful that "The Murder from Oliver Twist" became one of the most frequent and popular of his selections. Unfortunately, however, the physical exertion it involved was far greater than that of any of his previous readings, and added immensely to the excitement and consequent exhaustion which they caused him.

The readings began, as we have said, the first week in October, 1868, and were to have been continued to the end of May, 1869. Before the close of October, he began to suffer again from sleepless nights, and found it necessary, when he had to read, to lie on the sofa all day. Early in February a sudden and unusually violent attack of the old trouble in his foot compelled him to postpone a reading at St. James's Hall, and to delay for a day or two his departure for Scotland. From this time the foot continued to cause him pain and inconvenience; but, with his usual tenacity of will, he kept steadily on until he arrived at Preston, where he was to read on the 22d of April. "The day before this appointed reading," to quote from the editors of the "Letters," "he writes home of some grave symptoms which he had observed in himself, and had reported to his doctor, Mr. F. Carr Beard. That gentleman, taking alarm at what he considered 'indisputable

evidences of overwork,' wisely resolved not to content himself with written consultations, but went down to Preston on the day appointed for the reading there, and, after seeing his patient, peremptorily stopped it, carried him off to Liverpool, and the next day to London. There he consulted Sir Thomas Watson, who entirely corroborated Mr. Beard's opinion. And the two doctors agreed that the course of readings must be stopped for this year, and that reading, *combined with traveling*, must be stopped *for ever*. Charles Dickens had no alternative but to acquiesce in this verdict; but he felt it keenly, not only for himself but for the sake of the Messrs. Chappell, who showed the most disinterested kindness and solicitude on the occasion. He at once returned home to Gad's Hill, and the rest and quiet of the country restored him, for the time, to almost his usual condition of health and spirits. But it was observed by all who loved him that from this time forth he never regained his old vigor and elasticity. The attack at Preston was the 'beginning of the end!'"

This summer of 1869 was a very happy one, and was spent in entertaining his friends, in installing his eldest son as editor and manager of "All the Year Round," and in projecting improvements in his beloved country home. In a letter written in September he speaks of himself as being "in full force again," and adds (sad con-

sequence of improved health!) that he is "going to finish his farewell readings soon after Christmas." He had obtained the sanction of Sir Thomas Watson to giving twelve readings, *in London only*, which he had fixed for the beginning of the following year.

The close of the year 1869 found Dickens suffering from a renewed attack of the foot trouble, which was so severe on Christmas day that he was obliged to keep his room all day, and was only able to join the party of family and friends in the evening. Rallying again after a day or two, he went to London early in January, and took a house in Hyde Park Place, where he could remain during the readings, and thus avoid the railway travel up and down.

These final readings were given at St. James's Hall at intervals between the 11th of January and the 15th of May. They were given with perfect regularity as announced, and it was noted at the time that Dickens had never read with greater fire and impressiveness. The last reading ("Christmas Carol" and "The Trial from Pickwick") was given on Tuesday, the 15th of March, 1870, before the largest audience ever assembled in the immense hall; and at its close he spoke the following touching words of farewell:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: It would be worse than idle, for it would be hypocritical and unfeeling, if I were

to disguise that I close this episode in my life with feelings of very considerable pain. For some fifteen years, in this hall, and in many kindred places, I have had the honor of presenting my own cherished ideas before you for your recognition, and in closely observing your reception of them have enjoyed an amount of artistic delight and instruction, which, perhaps, it is given to few men to know. In this task and in every other I have ever undertaken as a faithful servant of the public, always imbued with the sense of duty to them, and always striving to do his best, I have been uniformly cheered by the readiest response, the most generous sympathy, and the most stimulating support. Nevertheless, I have thought it well, at the full flood-tide of your favor, to retire upon those older associations between us, which date much further back than these, and thenceforth to devote myself exclusively to the art that first brought us together. Ladies and gentlemen, in two short weeks from this time I hope that you may enter, in your own homes, on a new series of readings at which my assistance will be indispensable; but from these garish lights I vanish now for evermore, with a heartfelt, grateful, respectful, and affectionate farewell."

The new work thus referred to as about to begin was "The Mystery of Edwin Drood"; which was to be published in the familiar "green leaves," but was intended to be finished in twelve instead of twenty monthly parts. It had been begun by Dickens in the previous October with a view to sparing himself by having several numbers ready in advance of the publication of the first one; but the progress of the work was much interfered

with by the feebleness of his health, and was almost suspended during the period covered by the farewell readings. Immediately upon the close of the latter the first number was published, and the author was nearing the end of the sixth number when his busy pen was arrested by death.*

Before approaching the last scene of all, however, there are one or two facts that remain to be mentioned. In March, 1870, Dickens paid a visit to the Queen, she having intimated, through Sir Arthur Helps, her desire for a personal interview. He was received very cordially by the Queen, who, at the close of the interview, presented him with a copy of her "Journal in the Highlands," with an autograph inscription. In April he attended a levee held by the Prince of Wales, and the last time he dined out in London was at a party given by Lord Houghton to the King of the Belgians and the Prince of Wales, who had both expressed a desire to meet him. The state of his foot had made it very doubtful whether he could attend on that occasion, and it entirely prevented his ac-

* To show that Dickens had as yet lost none of his popularity, either with booksellers or with the public, we may mention that, according to the agreement, Messrs. Chapman & Hall were to pay in advance the sum of £7,500 for twenty-five thousand copies, publisher and author sharing equally in the profit of all sales beyond that number. Besides this, £1,000 was paid for early sheets to America, and Baron Tauchnitz paid liberally for his Leipsic reprint. The sale of the story, while the author yet lived, reached fifty thousand copies.

companying his daughter to the Queen's ball on the 17th of May. He had to excuse himself from the General Theatrical Fund dinner, at which the Prince of Wales was to preside ; and his last public appearance of any kind was at the Royal Academy dinner in May, which, though far from well, he attended, in order to pay a tribute to the memory his old friend Maclise, who had died in April.

All through the spring, though ailing in health, Dickens had been in good spirits, and his family felt no uneasiness about him, relying on the quiet and rest at Gad's Hill to have their usual influence in restoring his health and strength. He went down to Gad's Hill on the 3d of June, and during the next few days was very hard at work on the sixth number of "Edwin Drood."* On Monday and Tuesday, the 6th and 7th of June, he was well, but unequal to much exercise, and on the afternoon of Tuesday took his last walk—through Cobham Park and Wood.

"On the morning of Wednesday, the 8th (one of the loveliest days of a lovely summer), he was very well ; in excellent spirits about his book, of which he said he *must* finish his number that day —the next (Thursday) being the day of his weekly visit to the office of 'All the Year Round.'

* In our record of these last days we follow the account appended to the "Letters of Charles Dickens," and probably written by Miss Hogarth, who was the only eye-witness in the closing moments of consciousness.

Therefore, he would write all day in the chalet, and take no walk or drive until the evening. In the middle of the day he came to the house for an hour's rest, and smoked a cigar in the conservatory—out of which new addition to the house he was taking the greatest personal enjoyment—and seemed perfectly well, and exceedingly cheerful and hopeful. When he came again to the house, about an hour before the time fixed for the early dinner, he seemed very tired, silent, and absorbed. But this was so usual with him after a day of engrossing work that it caused no alarm or surprise to his sister-in-law—the only member of the family who happened to be at home. He wrote some letters in the library of the house, and also arranged many trifling business matters, with a view to his departure for London the next morning. . . . It was not until they were seated at the dinner-table that a striking change in the color and expression of his face startled his sister-in-law, and, on her asking him if he was ill, he said, 'Yes, very ill; I have been very ill for the last hour.' But, on her expressing an intention of sending instantly for a doctor, he stopped her, and said, 'No, he would go on with dinner, and go afterward to London.' And then he made an effort to struggle against the fit that was fast coming on him, and talked, but incoherently, and soon very indistinctly. It being now evident that he *was* ill, and very seriously ill, his sister-in-law

begged him to come to his room before she sent off for medical help. 'Come and lie down,' she entreated. 'Yes, on the ground,' he said, very distinctly—these were the last words he spoke—and he slid from her arm, and fell upon the floor."

A couch being hastily brought into the dining-room, he was laid upon it; medical aid was at once summoned, and different members of the family were sent for. Both physicians and family, however, arrived too late. All through the night Charles Dickens never opened his eyes, or showed a sign of consciousness; and he "remained in the same unconscious state until the evening of the 9th, when, at ten minutes past six, the watchers saw a shudder pass over him, heard him give a deep sigh, saw one tear roll down his cheek, and he was gone from them."

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the death of Charles Dickens, so shockingly sudden and unexpected, put the world in mourning; and the generous wish to do everything that could honor his memory found immediate and universal expression. Cordially sympathizing with this wish, Dean Stanley intimated to the family that the illustrious author should find his resting-place in Westminster Abbey. To so fitting a tribute no possible objection could be made, though other more public demonstrations of sorrow were kept within narrow limits by the following clause in Dickens's will:

"I emphatically direct that I be buried in an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner; that no public announcement be made of the time or place of my burial; that at the utmost not more than three plain mourning coaches be employed; and that those who attend my funeral wear no scarf, cloak, black bow, long hat-band, or other such revolting absurdity. I direct that my name be inscribed in plain English letters on my tomb, without the addition of 'Mr,' or 'Esquire'. I conjure my friends on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial, or testimonial whatever. I rest my claims to the remembrance of my country upon my published works, and to the remembrance of my friends upon their experience of me in addition thereto."

These directions were scrupulously carried out. None besides the family and most intimate friends were notified, and the funeral, which took place on June 14th, was as private as possible; but no prohibition could suffice to keep away the crowds of unbidden mourners who flowed in afterward and all the next day, and who filled the open grave with flowers. Nor were the terms of the will so construed as to forbid the solemn and affecting funeral discourse with which Dean Stanley commemorated the event on the following Sunday.

XVIII.

PERSONAL TRAITS.

THE means for forming a just idea of the leading characteristics of Charles Dickens have been furnished so copiously in previous portions of the work, that the present chapter would be superfluous but for the opportunity which it affords of bringing together some traits and facts which are too important to be overlooked entirely, and for which no place has been found in the regular course of the narrative. The reader must regard it, however, rather as a desultory collection of odds and ends than as a systematic attempt to portray or analyze a character.

Of Dickens's personal appearance, taste in dress, joviality and high spirits, love of sports and games, fondness for walking, and the like, enough has already been said, or, if not enough, as much as we have space for. It is as an author that he is chiefly interesting to us, and there are few who will not be interested in knowing that so strong with him was the power of association that he could not work comfortably without certain objects and ornaments which were carefully ranged in front of and around him, for his eye to rest upon in the intervals of actual writing, and any one of which he would have instantly missed if it had been removed. Describing these indis-

pensable little accompaniments of work, his son-in-law, Mr. Charles Collins, says: "There was a French bronze group representing a duel with swords, fought by a couple of very fat toads, one of them (characterized by that peculiar buoyancy which belongs to corpulence) in the act of making a prodigious lunge forward, which the other receives in the very middle of his digestive apparatus, and under the influence of which it seems likely that he will satisfy the wounded honor of his opponent by promptly expiring. There was another bronze figure which always stood near the toads, also of French manufacture, and also full of comic suggestion. It was a statuette of a dog-fancier, such a one as you used to see on the bridges or quays of Paris, with a profusion of little dogs stuck under his arms and into his pockets and everywhere where little dogs could possibly be insinuated, all for sale, and all, as even a casual glance at the vender's exterior would convince the most unsuspicious person, with some screw loose in their physical constitutions or moral natures, to be discovered immediately after purchase. There was the long gilt leaf with the rabbit sitting erect upon its haunches, the huge paper-knife often held in his hand during his public readings, and the little fresh green cup ornamented with the leaves and blossoms of the cowslip, in which a few fresh flowers were always placed every morning—for Dickens invariably

worked with flowers on his writing-table. There was also the register of the day of the week and of the month, which stood always before him; and when the room in the chalet in which he wrote his last paragraph was opened, some time after his death, the first thing to be noticed by those who entered was this register, set at 'Wednesday, June 8'—the day of his seizure." These were always carried with him wherever he went, and carefully placed and arranged as a preliminary to any work of a literary character. Also a bottle of the peculiar blue ink, which was as characteristic of his writing as the elaborate and complicated flourish with which he always accompanied his signature.

Dickens was extremely methodical in all his habits, whether of work or play. His love of order and neatness was almost painful; and there was no kind of work which he would not rather do himself than have it done wrong. Pictures he always hung himself, and there was seldom a hook or peg put up anywhere in the house that he did not do it himself or superintend it while being done. Unpunctuality or dilatoriness of any kind made him positively unhappy, and it is told of him that he was so anxious to be in time that he was invariably before the time. "He was," says Mr. Arthur Helps, who knew him well, "of a commanding and organizing nature; a good man of business, frank, clear, decisive, imperative; a

man to confide in and look up to as a leader, in the midst of any great peril."

It was one of his favorite theories that men differ in hardly anything so much as in their power of attention, and, whatever he put his hand to do, he did with all his might. "Whatever I have tried to do in life," he said, "I have tried with all my heart to do well. What I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could not throw my whole self, and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find now to have been my golden rules."

In his literary work he was not less methodical and systematic than in other things. He did not wait for "inspiration," but had regular hours of labor, commencing about ten o'clock and ending about two, and from these he seldom deviated. To a visitor who asked him if "the spirit" always came at his call, he answered, "No—sometimes I have to coax it: sometimes I do little else than draw figures or make dots on the paper, and plan and dream till perhaps my time is nearly up. But I always sit here, for that certain length of time." To the further inquiry whether, in case the flow of inspiration did not come till near the hour for lunch or exercise, he left that seat when the hour struck, he answered, "I go at once, hardly waiting to complete a sentence. I could not keep my health otherwise. I let nothing deprive me of my

tramp." Those who did not know his method of work were astonished at the smallness in amount of the manuscript produced at each day's sitting; but his composition, easy as it seems in the reading, was elaborate and slow. He labored at his works prodigiously, both in their conception and execution, and no writer ever acted more loyally up to the determination to give the public only his very best. A great artist, who once painted his portrait while he was in the act of writing one of the most popular of his stories, relates that he was astonished at the trouble Dickens seemed to take over his work, and at the number of forms in which he would write down a thought before he hit out the one which seemed to his fastidious fancy the best. The original MSS. of his works are full of interlineations and alterations; and Mr Arthur Helps has said of them: "To see those manuscripts would cure anybody of the idle and presumptuous notion that men of genius require no forethought or preparation for their greatest efforts, but that these are dashed off by the aid of a mysterious something which is comprehended in the mysterious word, 'genius'."

His faculty of observation was marvelously alert and rapid. Mr. Helps has said that, during a walk which they took together, Dickens observed nine objects for every one that he (Mr. Helps) observed; and Mr. Blanchard Jerrold mentions the still more curious fact that Dickens

scarcely ever looked direct at anything. "He walked along without turning his head or staring in front. He saw everything at a glance, or with 'half an eye.' It was only on very particular occasions that he looked hard at anything. He had no need. His was one of those gifted visions upon which objects photographed themselves on the retina in rapid succession."

Of society, in the usual sense of that term, Dickens was not fond. "No man," says Mr. Forster, "was better fitted to adorn any circle he entered, but beyond that of friends and equals he rarely passed. He would take as much pains to keep out of the houses of the great as others take to get into them." Nor did he shine in conversation. He had an invincible antipathy to discussion of any kind, and was never known to participate in it; but in telling a story, sketching a character, or relating an anecdote, he was unsurpassed; and his versatility and high spirits always made him an acquisition to any social gathering. According to Mr. Helps, he had a power of narrative which was beyond anything even which his books drew forth. "How he would narrate to you, sitting on a gate or a fallen tree, some rustic story of the people he had known in his neighborhood! It was the very perfection of narrative. Not a word was thrown away, not an adjective misused; and I think all who have had the good fortune to hear him recount one of

these stories will agree with me that it was a triumph—an unconscious triumph of art." Mr. Helps adds that Dickens was a very good listener, paying the greatest attention to the person who was speaking, and never interrupting, except perhaps by uttering, as if he approved of what was being said, the words, "surely, surely," which was a favorite expression of his.

In oratory Dickens was almost as successful as in writing, and for many years before his death he enjoyed the reputation of being the best after-dinner speaker of his time. "He spoke so well," Mr. Anthony Trollope has remarked, "that a public dinner became a blessing instead of a curse if he were in the chair—had its compensating twenty minutes of pleasure even, if he were called upon to propose a toast or thank the company for drinking his health." "He was herein greatly aided by nature," says Mr. Helps, "having that presence conveying the idea of courage and honesty which gives much effect to public speaking, and also possessing a sweet, deep-toned, audible voice, that had exceeding pathos in it. Moreover, he had most expressive hands—not beautiful, according to the ordinary notions of beauty, but nervous, powerful hands. He did not indulge in gesticulation; but the slight movement of these expressive hands helped wonderfully in giving additional force and meaning to what he said, as all those who have been present at his readings

will testify." And Mr. James T. Fields tells us: "He gave no thought to the composition of the speech he was to make till the day before he was to deliver it. No matter whether the effort was to be a long one or a short one, he never wrote down a word of what he was going to say; but, when the proper time arrived for him to consider his subject, he took a walk into the country and the thing was done. When he returned he was all ready for his task."

In view of this power as an orator, it may seem surprising that Dickens never aspired to public life; but, aside from his contempt for the House of Commons, there was another and a higher restraining motive, which he thus explained in his speech at the great banquet given him by the merchants of Liverpool on the 10th of April, 1869: "When I first took literature as my profession in England," he said, "I calmly resolved within myself that, whether I succeeded or whether I failed, literature should be my sole profession. It appeared to me at that time that it was not so well understood in England as it was in other countries that literature was a dignified profession, by which any man might stand or fall. I made a compact with myself that in my person literature should stand by itself, of itself, and for itself; and there is no consideration upon earth which could induce me to break that bargain."

How heartily Dickens entered into all forms

of social amusement has already been told; but there is an incident illustrative of this which he told Forster to remember for his biography, and for which we must find room. His two little daughters had taken much pains to teach their father the polka, that he might dance it with them at their brother's birthday festivity; and in the middle of the previous night, as he lay in bed, the fear having fallen upon him suddenly that the step was forgotten, he then and there, in the wintry dark cold night, got out of bed to practice it! "Anything *more* characteristic," says Mr. Forster, "could certainly not be told; unless I could have shown him dancing it afterward, and far excelling the youngest performer in untiring vigor and vivacity."

And in connection with this we may appropriately introduce another fact mentioned by Mr. Fields. "He was accustomed," says Mr. Fields, "to talk and write a good deal about eating and drinking, but I have rarely seen a man eat and drink less. He liked to dilate in imagination over the brewing of a bowl of punch, but when the punch was ready he drank less of it than any one who might be present. It was the sentiment of the thing, and not the thing itself, that engaged his attention."

It was Daniel Webster, we believe, who said that Dickens had done more to ameliorate the condition of the poor in England than all her

statesmen and legislators. He loved the poor; he sympathized with them; he had faith in them; and, in one of the last speeches that he ever made, he summed up briefly his political creed, as follows: "My faith in the people governing is, on the whole, infinitesimal; my faith in the people governed is, on the whole, illimitable." And in a letter referring to this speech he says: "The more we see of life and its brevity, and the world and its varieties, the more we know that no exercise of our abilities in any art, but the addressing of it to the great ocean of humanity in which we are drops, and not to by-ponds (very stagnant) here and there, ever can or ever will lay the foundations of an endurable retrospect."

But poverty was not the only thing that appealed to his sympathies. Sorrow, loss, misfortune, trouble of any kind, went to his heart; and, where he could really help, his benevolence was unbounded. Nor was his benevolence of the sort that contents itself with mere money-giving. Here is an anecdote (one of many similar ones) told after his death by Mr. Blanchard Jerrold: "A very dear friend of mine, and of many others to whom literature is a staff, had died. To say that his family had claims on Charles Dickens is to say that they were promptly acknowledged and satisfied with the grace and heartiness which double the gift, sweeten the bread, and warm the wine. I asked a connection of our dead friend

whether he had seen the poor wife and children. 'Seen them!' he answered. 'I was there to-day. They are removed into a charming cottage. They have everything about them; and, just think of this, when I burst into one of the parlors, in my eager survey of the new home, I saw a man in his shirt-sleeves, up some steps, hammering away lustily. He turned. It was Charles Dickens; and he was hanging the pictures for the widow.'"

Where the precepts of Christianity were practiced so consistently, it would seem superfluous to inquire into the particular form of creed which lay behind them; but it was long the fashion to speak of Dickens as irreligious; and many good people have been thereby misled into utterly false notions regarding him. Now that his letters have been made public, however, there can be no excuse for further misrepresentations of this kind; and, if they are made, they can easily be confuted. In a letter written in 1856 to a clergyman who had expressed admiration of a hymn introduced into one of his tales, Dickens said: "There can not be many men, I believe, who have a more humble veneration for the New Testament, or a more profound conviction of its all-sufficiency, than I have. If I am ever (as you tell me I am) mistaken on the subject, it is because I discountenance all obtrusive professions of and tradings in religion, as one of the main causes why real

Christianity has been retarded in this world; and because my observation of life induces me to hold in unspeakable dread and horror those unseemly squabbles about the letter which drive the spirit out of hundreds of thousands." Twelve years later, in a letter addressed to his son, Henry Fielding, on the latter's entering at Cambridge, he wrote:

"As your brothers have gone away one by one, I have written to each of them what I am now going to write to you. You know that you have never been hampered with religious forms of restraint, and that with mere unmeaning forms I have no sympathy. But I most strongly and affectionately impress upon you the priceless value of the New Testament, and the study of this book as the one unfailing guide in life. Deeply respecting it, and bowing down before the character of our Saviour, as separated from the vain constructions and inventions of men, you can not go very wrong, and will always preserve at heart a true spirit of veneration and humility. Similarly I impress upon you the habit of saying a Christian prayer every night and morning. These things have stood by me all through my life, and remember that I tried to render the New Testament intelligible to you and lovable by you when you were a mere baby."

And if a more solemn expression of belief be desired, it is found in the closing sentence of Dickens's will:

"I commit my soul to the mercy of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear

children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teachings of the New Testament in its broad spirit, and to put no faith in any man's narrow construction of its letter here or there."

THE END.

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